THE KA‘BA, PARADISE, AND IBN AL-KHAṬĪB IN SHĀLLA (RABAT): THE ‘WORK’ OF 14TH CENTURY MARĪNID FUNERARY COMPLEX*

La Ka‘ba, el paraíso e Ibn al-Jaṭīb en Šālla (Rabat): El ‘trabajo’ del complejo funerario meriní del siglo XIV

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Abstract: By the mid 14th century, the initially modest burial ground of the Marīnid dynasty (668/1269-870/1465) in Shālla had become a funerary complex with several buildings, and its main ‘work’ was to attract and impress huge numbers of visitors. One such visitor was Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb, who, this article shows, lived mostly at the royal shrine from 761/1360 to 763/1362. Following a reconsideration of the time he spent there, and based essentially on his own accounts, this paper focuses on two intertwined hermeneutical questions concerning how the experience of visiting Shālla resonated in the visitors’ perception. First, it demonstrates that some people construed the fourteenth-century garden at Shālla as a representation of paradise. Second, after a short discussion on how the Marīnid shrine developed into a centre of pilgrimage, it argues that some of the coeval written accounts interpret Shālla as an analogue of the Kaʿba and that some of its visitors performed rites borrowed from the pilgrimage to Mecca. The aim of this article is to investigate some of the ways in which Shālla ‘worked’ of glorifying the members of the Marīnid dynasty.

Resumen: A mediados del siglo XIV, el cementerio inicialmente modesto de la dinastía benimerín (668/1269-870/1465) en Šālla se convirtió en un complejo funerario de varios edificios, cuyo ‘trabajo’ principal era atraer e impresionar a las masas de visitantes. Uno de ellos fue Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Jaṭīb, quien, como se demostrará, vivió principalmente en el panteón real entre 761/1360 y 763/1362. Después de una reconsideración sobre su estancia en el lugar y basándonos esencialmente en sus relatos, el presente artículo se centra en dos preguntas hermenéuticas entrelazadas sobre cómo la experiencia de visitar a Šālla se reflejaba en la percepción de los visitantes. Se demuestra, en primer lugar, que algunas personas interpretaron este jardín del siglo XIV en Šālla como una representación del paraíso. En segundo lugar, después de una breve discusión de cómo el santuario benimerín se convirtió en un centro de peregrinación, se llega a la conclusión de que algunas de las fuentes coetáneas interpretan a Šālla como un sitio análogo a la Ka‘ba, y que algunos de sus visitantes cumplían ritos adoptados de la peregrinación a la Meca. El objetivo de este artículo

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es investigar algunas de las formas en que Šālla 'trabajó' para glorificar a los miembros de la dinastía benimerín.
Key words: Marīnid dynasty. Shālla. Ibn al-Khaṭīb. Funerary architecture. Hermeneutics.
Palabras clave: Benimerínes. Šālla. Ibn al-Jaṭīb. Arquitectura funeraria. Hermenéutica.
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INTRODUCTION

> A little further out from the town [of Rabat] are the ruins of Shella, […] probably the Roman colony which seems to have given its name to Salli (Salé), perhaps a Carthaginian settlement. […] [Here are] the Beni Marîn tombs which lend special interest to the spot, though Roman and other ancient coins have been found here. Among the few remains of antiquity are some stone vaults, an arched canal, perhaps Roman, and a piece of old wall. Otherwise, although picturesquely ruinous, and overgrown with vegetation surmounted with storks' nests, the beautiful gate-ways and mosque-tower which still stand are all comparatively modern[1].

This introduction to the site of Shālla (often transliterated as 'Chellah') by James Edward Budgett-Meakin (1866–1906), probably the first Englishman to conduct research on Islamic Morocco, is still essentially accurate today. Located just outside of the Almohad ramparts of Rabat (Figure 1) and encircled by impressive fortification walls c. 1 km long, the site features extensive remains of the Mauretanian and then Roman town. One should note, however, that by "comparatively modern" Budgett-Meakin is referring to Islamic buildings, most of which date from the Marīnid dynasty that ruled over the north-west corner of Africa between 668/1269 and 870/1465.

The Marīnid sultans established their dynastic funerary complex, generally recognised as one of the most picturesque architectural achievements of the period, partially on top of the ancient ruins and reusing the Roman water system at the site. Their patronage coincided with the heyday of the dynasty, and the first sultan, Abū Yūsuf (656/1258-685/1286), was also the first Marīnid ruler to be buried there. Most of the extant —though mainly dilapidated— Islamic structures are concentrated in the funerary complex, and date from the reigns of Abū l-Ḥasan (731/1331-752/1351) and Abū 'Inān (752/1351-759/1358). These two sultans transformed the theretofore modest burial ground into an ensemble of buildings which included a mosque (Figure 2/A), a madrasa (O), two ablution buildings (Q, V) and several mausolea (E, F, G [Figure 3], J, K)[2]. Although the

1. James E. Budgett-Meakin. *The land of the Moors. A comprehensive description*. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1901, p. 176.
2. For Marīnid Shālla, see ʿUthmān ʿUthmān Ismāʿīl. *Tārīkh Shālla al-Islāmīya. Ṣafḥāt jadīda fī tārīkh al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā min 'aṣr al-Adārisa ilā nihāyat 'aṣr al-Marīniyīn*. Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1975; *idem*. *Ḥafā'ir Shālla al-Islāmīya. Abḥāth tārīkhīya wa-kushūf atharīya bi-l-Maghrib al-Aqṣā*.

following rulers stopped using Shālla as their burial ground, their interest in and support of the site did not cease, or at least not abruptly. The sultans Abū Sālim (760/1359-762/1361) and Abū Zayyān (762/1361-766/1365), as discussed below, ensured the maintenance of the royal shrine.

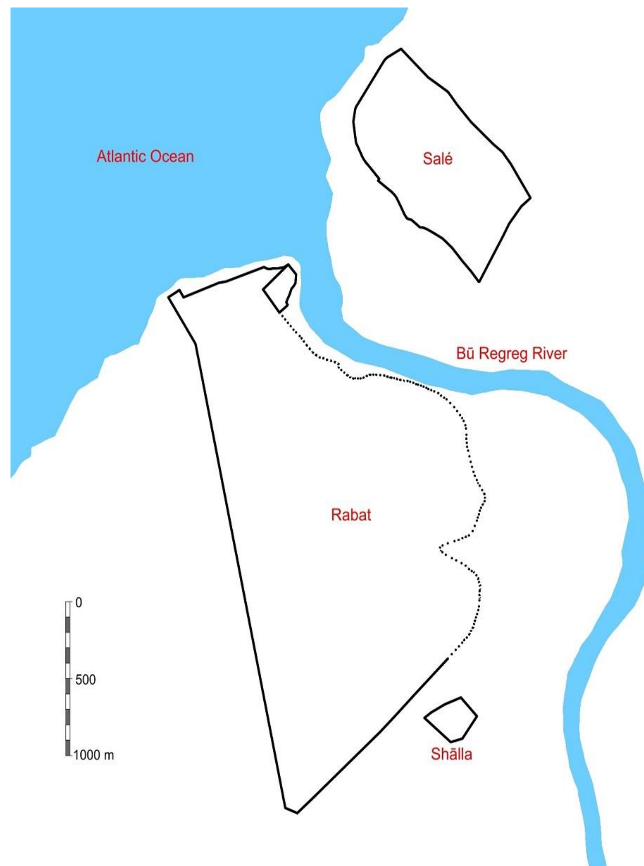


Figure 1. Map of the area of Shālla, including the city walls of Rabat and Salé. The labels 'Rabat' and 'Salé' follow the modern —and *not* the Marīnid— use of toponyms (cf. Fig. 5). Sketch by the author.

Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1978; Péter T. Nagy. "Sultans' paradise. The royal necropolis of Shāla, Rabat". *Al-Masāq*, 26, 2 (2014), pp. 132-146; Ahmad S. Ettahiri and Bulle Tuil-Leonetti. "Chella, de la nécropole mérinide au royaume des djinns". In *Maroc médiéval. Un empire de l'Afrique à l'Espagne*. Ed. Yannick Lintz, Claire Déléry, and Bulle Tuil-Leonetti. Paris: Louvre, 2014. pp. 502-505.

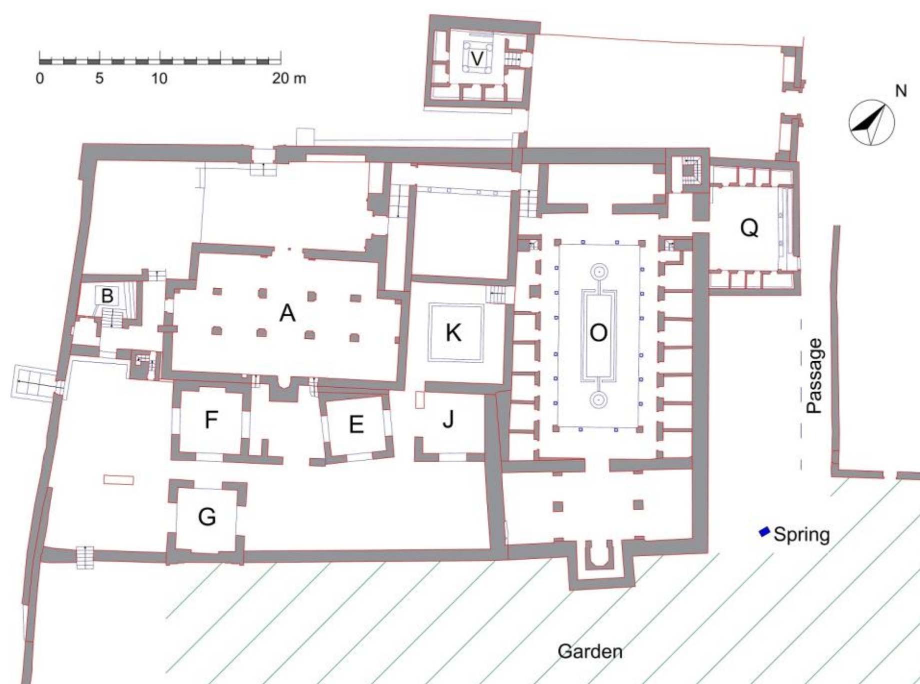


Figure 2. Site plan of the funerary complex of Shālla. Drawing by the author

The present paper focuses on a hitherto neglected aspect of this artwork, the dynastic funerary complex at Shālla, in the Marīnid period. Just as every artwork, by definition, *works*, Shālla made people travel to its location, impressed them with its monuments, showed its inscriptions to them, and encouraged them to perform rites in honour of the deceased. That is, the site carried out acts which can be regarded as its *work*, and which manifested as cognitive perception in the visitors' experience. As Stephennie Mulder phrases it, "the work of art *itself* can be proposed as a kind of active social catalyst, engaged in the process of continuous and shifting creation of significance"[3]. This approach, originating from the methodology of the anthropologist Alfred Gell and recently adopted by

3. Stephennie Mulder. "Seeing the light. Enacting the divine at three medieval Syrian shrines". In *Envisioning Islamic art and architecture. Essays in honor of Renata Holod*. Ed. David J. Roxburgh. Leiden: Brill, 2014, p. 90 (author's italics).

Simon O'Meara for studying the Ka'ba in Mecca[4], can also be employed for addressing Shālla. What follows below are three case studies, focusing on how the Marīnid funerary complex made its visitors perceive their experience. The first one, the sojourn of Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1375), presents the story of an exiled Andalusī intellectual who sought solace at the royal tombs. Whereas previous scholars have tended to ignore Ibn al-Khaṭīb's writings on Shālla, I shall argue that those are the most revealing sources for some questions related to the site. Had it not been for him, the second and third case studies —concerning the paradisiac significance and the Meccan association of Shālla— would have remained nearly unknown for us today.



Figure 3. The mausoleum of Abū l-Ḥasan in Shālla (Fig. 2/G) with the modern garden in the background. Photo by the author.

4. Alfred Gell. *Art and agency. An anthropological theory*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998, pp. 1-11; Simon O'Meara. *The Kaaba. Orientations in space and vision.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019 (forthcoming).

IBN AL-KHAṬĪB IN SHĀLLA

The writings of Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb are generally considered among the most important Arabic sources for the period. He was one of the brightest intellectuals of his age, the Naṣrid vizier and an insightful historian of Granada, who also spent some time in the Marīnid sultanate, and yet his lengthy writings on Shālla have never received more than passing attention[5]. Before turning to how he perceived the funerary complex of Shālla, I shall first focus on his sojourn at the site, especially because his exile to Morocco seems to have been misunderstood so far.

The biography of Ibn al-Khaṭīb is relatively well-known, especially since Muḥammad ʻAbdallāh ʻInān published his invaluable monograph in 1968[6]. Ibn al-Khaṭīb served at the court of the Naṣrid sultan Yūsuf I (733/1333-755/1354) in Granada as head of the royal chancellery and vizier. He then retained his positions under Muḥammad V (755/1354-760/1359, 763/1362-793/1391), and accompanied his master into exile in Morocco between 760/1359 and 763/1362. It is generally held that he lived in Salé during most of this time. A modern Moroccan scholar local to Salé, Jaʻfar ibn Aḥmad al-Nāṣirī, even dedicated a monograph to this period in Ibn al-Khaṭīb's biography, with the title *Ibn al-Khaṭīb bi-Salā* (Ibn al-Khaṭīb in Salé)[7]. Many scholars have since reiterated the same notion, claiming that he visited Shālla, probably stayed there for a short while, but then moved to Salé[8]. However, there is simply no clear evidence in support of this theory, and, as I shall argue, Ibn al-Khaṭīb lived in Shālla, not Salé, during most of his exile.

5. See, however, Henri Basset and Évariste Lévi-Provençal. "Chella. Une nécropole mérinide". *Hespéris*, 2 (1922), pp. 22-25. Part of the reason for this lacuna may be found in the judgment by Basset and Lévi-Provençal, dismissing one of the writings of Ibn al-Khaṭīb on Shālla as "jumble of rhetoric" (*fatras de rhétorique*); *ibid*. p. 24.

6. Muḥammad ʻAbdallāh ʻInān. *Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb. Ḥayātuhu wa-turāthuhu al-fikrī*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānijī, 1968. See also Barbara Boloix-Gallardo. "Introduction". In *Praising the 'Tongue of Religion'. Essays in honor of the 700th anniversary of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's birth*. Ed. Barbara Boloix-Gallardo. Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 277-287, with a comprehensive bibliography on Ibn al-Khaṭīb.

7. Jaʻfar ibn Aḥmad al-Nāṣirī. *Ibn al-Khaṭīb bi-Salā*. Salé: al-Khizāna al-ʻIlmīya al-Ṣubayḥīya, 1988. This study fails to prove that Ibn al-Khaṭīb actually lived in Salé. The author's opinion is essentially based on this sentence by Ibn al-Khaṭīb: "I was inclined to live in the town of Salā, where sanctity abides in the premises, and where merit has settled the market due to the sacred mausoleum"; al-Nāṣirī. *Ibn al-Khaṭīb*, p. 23. As demonstrated below, Ibn al-Khaṭīb mentions the "town of Salā" when he describes his experience in Shālla, and by "sacred mausoleum" he most likely refers to that of Abū al-Ḥasan in Shālla.

8. See, for instance, ʻInān. *Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb*, pp. 76-102; Ismāʻīl. *Tārīkh Shālla al-Islāmīya*, pp. 65-66; Emilio Molina López. *Ibn al-Jatib*. Granada: Editorial Comares, 2001, pp. 92-102; Jacinto Bosch-Vilá. "Ibn al-Khaṭīb". In *The encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden: Brill, 1986, 2nd ed. [EI^2], vol. 3. pp. 835-837; Alexander Knysh. "Ibn al-Khaṭīb". In *The literature of al-Andalus*. Ed. María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 359; Laila M. Jreis Navarro. "La riḥla jatibiana a través de la *Nufāḍat al-jirāb* de Ibn al-Jaṭīb". In *Saber y*

The misunderstanding derives from the writings of Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself, and his seemingly confusing use of toponyms. Mentioning the funeral of Abū l-Ḥasan in 752/1351, he says that it took place in 'Salā'[9], despite the fact that it happened in Shālla where his mausoleum still exists today (Figure 2/G; Figure 3). This already indicates that the toponym 'Salā' could not have meant the same for Ibn al-Khaṭīb as it does for us today, namely, the town of Salé on the Atlantic coast north of the Bū Regreg river (Figure 1). As this is not the place to discuss the historical geography of the area in detail, a few notes on that must suffice. The site of Shālla was a Roman town known in Latin as 'Sala', a name that the early authors writing in Arabic rendered as 'Salā'[10]. The anonymous *al-Istibṣār fī 'ajā'ib al-amṣār* (written in 580/1184-85) explains that the name 'Shālla' is the Berber (*'ajamī*) equivalent of 'Salā'[11]. However, by then, a new city had been founded on the Atlantic coast, which was, confusingly enough, also known as (New) Salā, and which still bears the name Salé today. In the Marīnid period, the sources often mention the location of Shālla as belonging to, or being part of, Salā. This explains why Ibn al-Khaṭīb says that Abū l-Ḥasan was buried in Salā, whereas he actually means Shālla. The same author also mentions "the burial place of [Abū Ya'qūb's] ancestor (Abū Yūsuf) in Salā"[12]. This can only mean that the toponym 'Salā' once designated not only present-day Salé, but also its surrounding area, including Shālla.

poder en al-Andalus. Ibn al-Jaṭīb (siglo XIV). Estudios en conmemoración del 700 aniversario del nacimiento de Ibn al-Jaṭīb (Loja, 1313-Fez, 1375). Ed. María Dolores Rodríguez, Antonio Peláez Rovira, and Bárbara Boloix Gallardo. Córdoba: El Almendro, 2014, pp. 217-249; cf. Ibn ʿAlī l-Dukkālī. *Al-Durra al-yatīma fī waṣf madīnat Shālla al-ḥadītha wa-l-qadīma*. Ed. 'Abīr Fahd Shaddūd. Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 2012, pp. 75-76.

9. Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Raqm al-ḥulal fī naẓm al-duwal*. Tunis: al-Maṭba'a al-'Umūmīya, 1317AH, p. 97. Abū l-Ḥasan was temporarily buried in Marrakesh before being transported to Shālla.

10. Ismā'īl. *Tārīkh Shālla al-Islāmīya*, pp. 49-63.

11. *Kitāb al-istibṣār fī 'ajā'ib al-amṣār. Waṣf Makka wa-l-Madīna wa-Miṣr wa-bilād al-Maghrib*. Ed. Sa'd Zaghlūl 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. Casablanca: Les Editions Maghrébines, 1985, p. 140.

12. "*... madfani salafihī bi-Salā*"; Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Al-Iḥāṭa fī akhbār Gharnāṭa*. Ed. Muḥammad 'Abdallāh 'Inān. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānijī, 1973-1977, vol. 4, p. 357. The sultans Abū Yūsuf (656/1258-685/1286) and Abū Ya'qūb (685/1286-706/1307) were both buried at Shālla. For a similar passage, see Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī. *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*. Ed. Kāmil Salmān al-Jabbūrī. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīya, vol. 4, p. 113; [Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī l-Maʿālī Ibn Sammāk]. *Al-Ḥulal al-mawshīya fī dhikr al-akhbār al-Marrākushīya*. Ed. Suhayl Zakkār and ʿAbd al-Qādir Zammāma. Casablanca: Dār al-Rashshād al-Ḥadītha, 1979, p. 177.



Figure 4. Bird's-eye view of Salā, 1574. Georg Braun, Simon van den Neuwel, and Franz Hogenberg. *Beschreibung und Contrafactur der vornembster Stät der Welt*. Cologne, 1574, vol. 1, following p. 57.

What the sources meant by 'Salā' can also be understood from medieval and early modern maps and depictions, in which the toponym always stands for the area as a whole. A German bird's-eye view image from 1574 (Figure 4) labels the area as "SALA", modern Rabat as "Sala Vetus" (Old Sala), modern Salé as "Sala Nova" (New Sala), and Shālla as "Sepultura Regum Feßae" (Sepulchre of the kings of Fez)[13]. That is, 'SALA', according to the image, encompassed all the other localities. Using this toponym as the name of the area accords with other pre-modern maps, such as al-Idrīsī's world map (c. 548/1154)[14], the atlas of

13. Depictions and maps of the city retain using the general toponym 'Sala' until the mid-eighteenth century, often differentiating between 'Old Sala' and 'New Sala' on either side of the river. See Robert Ricard and Jacques Caillé. "Salé-le-Vieux et Salé-le-Neuf". *Hespéris*, 34 (1947), pp. 441-442; Jacques Caillé. *La ville de Rabat jusqu'au protectorat français. Histoire et archéologie*. Paris: Vanoest, 1949, plates XXVIII-XXIX, XXXVI-XXXIX.

14. As reproduced by Konrad Miller (1844-1933); see Tindaro Gatani, Konrad Miller, and Michele Amari (eds.). *L'opera di al-Idrīsī, geografo arabo-siculo del XII secolo*. Palermo: Arti Grafiche Palermitane, 2012.

Petrus Vesconte of Genova (c. 1320-1325)[15], the Catalan Atlas made in Majorca (c. 1375)[16], as well as the so-called Maghrib Chart (Figure 5). Produced either in Morocco or al-Andalus in the first half of the fourteenth century, this chart is of particular relevance to the present question because it also names the area as 'Salā'[17]. It is therefore evident that, at least in pre-modern sources, 'Rabat' and 'Shālla' were generally understood as subordinate toponyms of the main geographic entity, 'Salā'. Consequently, whenever a medieval author says 'Salā', one cannot simply identify it with the modern town of Salé, and this observation is particularly significant when it comes to Ibn al-Khaṭīb's accounts.

The events that lead to Ibn al-Khaṭīb's exile from al-Andalus begin in Ramaḍān 760/August 1359, when a palace revolt breaks out in the Alhambra, and the Naṣrid sultan Muḥammad V is ousted from power. He first flees to Guadix, and then, on the invitation of the Marīnid sultan Abū Sālim, arrives in Fez on 6 Muḥarram 761/28 November 1359, along with his vizier Ibn al-Khaṭīb. While Muḥammad V enjoys a palace provided for him in Fez, Ibn al-Khaṭīb has apparently no interest in staying there. He would rather go explore Abū Sālim's realm, and so he asks for the Marīnid sultan's permission to travel around in Morocco. Then, having completed his journey, he chooses to settle down in the area mentioned as 'Salā' in Rajab 761/May 1360[18].

15. Marino Sanuto. *Liber secretorum fidelium crucis*. MS British Library (London) Add. 27376*, fols. 180v–181r.

16. *Catalan Atlas*. MS Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris). MS Esp 30.

17. *Maghrib chart*. MS Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Milano) S.P.II.259. For Salā, see Juan Vernet-Ginés. "The Maghreb Chart in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana". *Imago Mundi*, 16 (1962), p. 14 (toponym no. 226).

18. On Ibn al-Khaṭīb's exile, see Laila M. Jreis Navarro. "Cartas y noticias de ambos lados del estrecho. El universo jatibiano a través de la *Nufāḍat al-ŷirāb*". *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos. Sección Árabe-Islam*, 62 (2013), pp. 83-106; *idem*. "La *riḥla* jatibiana"; *idem. Entre las dos orillas. El viaje de exilio de Ibn al-Jaṭīb a través de su obra Nufāḍat al-ŷirāb fī ʿulālat al-igtirāb*. PhD dissertation. University of Granada, 2016, pp. 121-144.

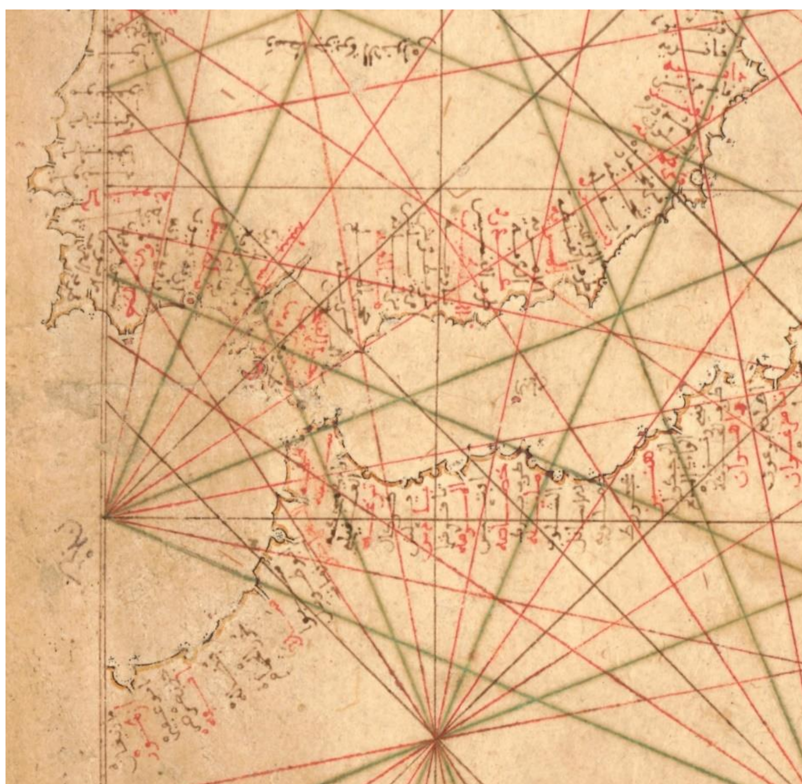


Figure 5. *The Maghrib Chart*, map of the Western Mediterranean and Western Europe, detail. Ink on paper, 23.5 cm x 16 cm. Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana/Mondadori Portfolio ©

The most detailed source for Ibn al-Khaṭīb's exile in Morocco is his *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*. It has a chapter dedicated entirely to Shālla, which contains some of the letters that he receives or sends from there. Notably, the chapter is titled "Returning to the town of Salā" —and the chapter heading comes from the original manuscript— even though the town known today as Salé is not even mentioned in the text. As demonstrated above, this should warn us that 'Salā' cannot refer to what is modern-day Salé, but only to a wider geographical area encompassing Shālla. In this chapter of the *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, one reads that Ibn al-Khaṭīb arrives in Shālla, and writes a letter to the sultan Abū Sālim:

> This is Ibn al-Khaṭīb, who is devoted to the burial site of the lord, your father (Abū l-Ḥasan), writing from the sacred mausoleum in Shālla […]. He has decided voluntarily not to leave these noble premises and the protected precinct until the reply concerning the question of the grave of this noble lord arrives from your highness[19].

The actual subject of the letter unfolds gradually; Ibn al-Khaṭīb first transmits Abū l-Ḥasan's message to his son, Abū Sālim. In other words, Ibn al-Khaṭīb performs necromancy as he engages in conversation with Abū l-Ḥasan, who died almost a decade before:

> I lent my ears to [Abū l-Ḥasan's] grave […], and it was as if he was saying to me: "Tell your lord (Abū Sālim): 'My son, the apple of my eye […], Ibn al-Khaṭīb told me that his money had been stolen, he had many dependants, his body was weak […], but he was hoping that he could devote himself to my premises, and stay in my precinct and in my service. […] Today, I want this man to be my servant'"[20].

Then a bit further down in the letter, Ibn al-Khaṭīb eventually states his goal explicitly, asking the sultan: "Appoint me to the service of this lord, to his pilgrimage, to his seekers, and to praising the Prophet […] on the night of his birthday in the premises [of Shālla]!"[21]. The letter is dated to 11 Rajab 761/28 May 1360, and one can see from it that Ibn al-Khaṭīb intends to live in Shālla. Given his devotion to the site and its neglected state suggested in his text, he has the idea of creating a position for himself there, and applies for it to Abū Sālim. According to the sultan's reply, he welcomes idea and hires Ibn al-Khaṭīb[22].

In a second letter to Abū Sālim, Ibn al-Khaṭīb describes briefly what else he is doing in Shālla: "I told the seekers: 'Oh you, we have been reciting the Book of God, the exalted, for days, strengthening our faith and forming fraternity in this

19. *Al-Munqaṭiʻu ilā turbati l-mawlā wālidikum, Ibnu l-Khaṭībi, mina l-ḍarīḥi l-muqaddasi bi-Shāllata […]. wa-qad ʿazama allā yabraḥa ṭūʿan min hādhā l-jiwāri l-karīmi wa-l-dakhīli l-marʿīyi ḥattā yaṣila min maqāmikum mā yunāsibu hādhā l-taṭāruḥa ʿalā qabri hādhā l-mawlā l-ʿazīzi*; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 81.

20. *Aṣghaytu bi-udhunayya ʿinda qabrihī [...] fa-ka-annī bihī yaqūlu lī: "Qul li-mawlāka: 'yā-waladī wa-qurrata ʿaynī [...], hādhā bnu l-Khaṭībi [...], qad akhbaranī annahū salību l-māli, kathīru l-ʿiyāli, ḍaʿīfu l-jismi [...], wa-ammala an yanqaṭiʿa bi-jiwārī wa-yastatira bi-dakhīlī wa-khidmatī [...]. fa-anā l-yawma urīdu an yakūna hādhā l-rajulu khadīmī...*'"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, pp. 82-83.

21. "*...an ... tuʿayyinūnī li-khidmati hādhā l-mawlā wa-ziyāratihī wa-tafaqqudihī wa-madḥi l-nabīyi [...] laylata l-mawlidi fī jiwārihī*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 84. The letter also contains a poem that summarises the same content.

22. Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, pp. 86-88. Abū Sālim also assures that he will send messengers to reclaim the confiscated property of Ibn al-Khaṭīb in Granada.

sacred *ribāṭ*, and I live among you'"[23]. Here Ibn al-Khaṭīb reveals that he is living at the site, apparently instructing the "seekers" (*ṭalaba*, that is, pilgrims or students) there, with whom he would read the Qur'ān. The letter ends with Ibn al-Khaṭīb interrupting the Qur'ān-reading and saying a prayer for Abū l-Ḥasan, inviting the others to "say 'amen' wholeheartedly for my prayer"[24]. That is, Ibn al-Khaṭīb intends to teach respect and loyalty to the dead sultan.

As for the length of Ibn al-Khaṭīb's sojourn in Shālla, it should be noted that he apparently receives and sends letters from there until 27 Shaʿbān 761/13 July 1360, and even recounts the annual feast of the site on 27 Ramaḍān [761]/11 August [1360][25]. This means that he is still there at the time. He then travels to Fez in order to offer his services to the new Marīnid sultan Abū Zayyān (762/1361-766/1365)[26]. In his *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, he quotes two sultanic decrees (sg. *ẓahīr*) which are issued for him on this occasion in the palace of Fez, and which prove that he continues working for the Marīnid state. His status as an employee along with his salary is confirmed on 6 and 10 Rabī' II 763/2 and 6 February 1362 by Abū Zayyān, who also requests Ibn al-Khaṭīb to report to Fez on what he witnesses. Although these documents mention 'Salā' as Ibn al-Khaṭīb's place of residence, they clearly refer to the sacred funerary complex and popular pilgrimage site, that is, Shālla. In one of the decrees, Abū Zayyān says: "May [God] watch over [Ibn al-Khaṭīb's] service of the elevated and majestic ancestor (Abū l-Ḥasan)!"[27]. In between the two documents, Ibn al-Khaṭīb rejoices over "the renewal of the contract of the pilgrimage to the blessed abodes"[28], which should be understood as a reference to Shālla[29]. Consequently, it seems that his earlier job and the one renewed by these decrees were one and the same.

After his visit to the Marīnid court, Ibn al-Khaṭīb travels to southern Morocco in Rabī' II 763/February 1362, and when he returns and reaches the Tāmasnā region (south of Rabat-Salé), he complains about his illness, and decides to settle

23. "*Thumma qultu li-l-ṭalabati: 'ayyuhā l-sādatu, baynī wa-baynakum tilāwatu kitābi llāhi taʿālā mundhu ayyāmin wa-munāsabatu l-naḥlati wa-ukhuwwatu l-taʾallufi bi-hādhā l-ribāṭi l-muqaddasi, wa-l-suknā bayna aẓhurikum'*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 90.

24. "*…fa-amminū ʿalā duʿāʾī bi-ikhlāṣin min qulūbikum*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 90.

25. Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, pp. 91, 122.

26. Jreis Navarro. *Entre las dos orillas*, p. 129.

27. "*Wa-raʿā lahū khidmata l-salafi l-rafīʿi l-jalāli*"; Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb fī ʿulālat al-ightirāb*. Ed. al-Saʿdīya Fāghiya, Casablanca: Maṭbaʿat al-Najāḥ al-Jadīda, 1989, vol. 3, p. 67; also *idem*. *al-Iḥāṭa*, vol. 4, p. 456.

28. "*…tajdīdi l-ʿahdi bi-ziyārati l-maʿāhidi l-mubārakati*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 3, pp. 67-69.

29. As discussed above, Ibn al-Khaṭīb says in his first letter to Abū Sālim: "Appoint me to the pilgrimage (*ziyāra*)!"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 84.

down again in the area of 'Salā'[30]. Therein he seeks "the help of God and the blessing of the lord (*mawlā*) whose mercy has been known, and whose grace has been plentiful on the people passing by or staying", and also mentions "the saint, in whose premises God lavishes blessings"[31]. These comments seem to be direct references to Shālla, Abū l-Ḥasan's sanctity, and the author's previous experience there, particularly because *mawlā* ('lord') is a typical way of addressing a sultan. In other words, Ibn al-Khaṭīb returns to Shālla and stays there for the second time. Finally, after the Naṣrid sultan Muḥammad V recovers his throne in the Alhambra, Ibn al-Khaṭīb also leaves for Granada on 14 Rajab 763/9 May 1362[32].

In short, Shālla had such a significant impact upon Ibn al-Khaṭīb that he decided to settle down there in Rajab 761/ May 1360. As an employee appointed by the sultan to Shālla, he was a caretaker and the pilgrims' guide for a period of nearly two years. And given that he eye-witnessed most of the events taking place at the Marīnid shrine in this period, his writings are inevitably among the most important sources for the site. Unfortunately, he did not produce any systematic account of his experience in Morocco but only some miscellaneous autobiographical notes in his *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, parts of which are now lost. However, he makes it clear that the lure of the sacred funerary complex at Shālla has persuaded him to stay and serve there, and his accounts illuminate at least two aspects of the *work* of Shālla that are nearly unknown from other sources.

PARADISE IN SHĀLLA

"Gardens of Eden, which [the faithful] will enter, beneath which rivers flow" [Qurʾān, 16.31]. This Qurʾānic verse is one of the typical descriptions of paradise, the abode that awaits the faithful, and the Qurʾān gives some further idea as to how one should imagine the hereafter. Paradise is formed by an all-encompassing garden or gardens, with a flowing spring [Qurʾān, 88.12; 55.50], and four rivers of water, milk, wine, and honey [Qurʾān, 47.15]. There are abundant fruit trees [Qurʾān, 47.15; 55.52; 55.54], palaces [Qurʾān, 25.10], and various pleasures which the faithful are forbidden to enjoy in their earthly lives. In order to arrive there, one must walk through the narrow passage (*ṣirāṭ*) that forms a bridge over hell and leads to the basin (*ḥawḍ*) supplied by one of the rivers of paradise[33].

30. Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 3, p. 87; Jreis Navarro. *Entre las dos orillas*, pp. 129-133.

31. "*... mustaʿīnan bi-llāhi wa-bi-barakati l-mawlā lladhī ʿurifat raḥmatuhū wa-ghamarat fī l-ẓaʿni wa-l-iqāmati niʿmatuhū*"; "*al-walīyu lladhī manna llāhu bi-jiwārihī*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 3, p. 87.

32. Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 3, p. 145.

33. See Christian Lange. *Paradise and hell in Islamic traditions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 39-45, 182, and passim.

Undoubtedly, some Muslim patrons had in mind these Qur'ānic images when they commissioned artworks, including gardens, in the pre-modern Islamic world[34]. Nonetheless, even if it is typical of Arabic literature to compare gardens with paradise, the mere assumption that all Islamic gardens have necessarily something to do with the hereafter is hardly a scholarly approach[35]. Detached from the topic of simple gardens is that of funerary monuments whose garden settings might have meant to refer to the paradise in which the deceased wished to enter. One cannot, however, simply infer a paradisiac association in case of a funerary garden either, unless this association is supported by evidence. This problem is exemplified by the impressive mausoleum attributed to the Seljuq sultan Sanjar (511/1118-552/1157) at Merv (Turkmenistan). It has been proposed that this structure might have been set in a typical *chahār bāgh* ("four gardens" in Persian). The quadripartite layout of such gardens usually includes four waterways that could recall the four rivers of paradise[36]. Unfortunately, there is no archaeological evidence for a coeval garden of any form around this mausoleum, as well as the textual sources are silent on this matter[37]. Probably the earliest evidence for an Islamic mausoleum set in a garden with explicit paradisiac significance, as demonstrated by Dede Fairchild Ruggles, comes from the Great Mughals of India (932/1526-1274/1857), from monuments such as the Tomb of Akbar (completed by 1022/1613) or the Taj Mahal (completed by 1052/1643) in Agra[38]. Nevertheless, earlier examples from the medieval Islamic world could have conveyed the same meaning, one just has to find evidence for that. This is exactly what one can learn about Shālla from Ibn al-Khaṭīb, as well as from some related features of the site.

Little attempt has been made to attest the paradisiac association of Shālla so far. Fairchild Ruggles has suggested that "the cemetery [of Shālla] may possibly

34. See *Images of paradise in Islamic art*. Ed. Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom. Hanover, N.H.: Hood Museum of Art, 1992; Dede Fairchild Ruggles. *Islamic gardens and landscapes*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008, pp. 103-116.

35. For a thorough discussion of this question, see Terry Allen. *Imagining paradise in Islamic art*. Sebastopol: Solipsist Press, 2015 [http://www.sonic.net/~tallen/palmtree/ip.html, accessed: 16 February 2017].

36. Ruggles. *Islamic gardens*, p. 108.

37. A slightly later visitor to Merv, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), mentions neither a garden nor paradise, and describes the mausoleum as being set in a building complex; Shihāb al-Dīn Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī. *Muʿjam al-buldān*. Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1977, vol. 5, p. 114; cf. Christian Lange. *Paradise and hell*, p. 259. For this building, see Robert Hillenbrand. "The Seljuq monuments of Turkmenistan". In *The Seljuqs. Politics, society and culture*. Ed. Christian Lange and Songul Mecit. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011, pp. 285-303.

38. Ruggles. *Islamic gardens*, pp. 111-113. See also Wayne E. Begley. "The myth of the Taj Mahal and a new theory of its symbolic meaning". *The Art Bulletin*, 61, 1 (1979), pp. 7-37; Lange. *Paradise and hell*, pp. 259-261.

have been planted with flowers and shrubs selected for beauty or scent"[39]. Plausible as it might be, this point remains conjectural. However, although the garden visible in Shālla today was planted under the French protectorate of Morocco[40], the sources mention a garden or orchard at the site already in the fourteenth century. Ibn al-Ḥājj al-Numayrī (d. c. 782/1380), for instance, reports: "Attached to the new dome is the madrasa, situated in the direction of the blissful garden"[41]. This is a somewhat confusing statement, since by "new dome" he most likely means the mausoleum of Abū l-Ḥasan (Figure 2/G), which is not attached to the madrasa (O). Nonetheless, just a few lines below, al-Numayrī mentions that "the orchard (*bustān*) was created on the *qibla* side of [the madrasa]"[42]. It is clear that the garden (or orchard) was next to the madrasa, which —given the other buildings surrounding it— is only possible on its *qibla* side, a location coinciding with that of its modern reincarnation (Figure 2).

In addition, one should note that there is a passage parallel with the north-east wall of the funerary complex, leading to the garden today, and the barrier wall flanking this passage on its north-east side (left in Figure 6) seems to date from the Marīnid period. This means that not only was the garden roughly at the same location as today, but also that the passage leading there gives us a comparable experience today as in Marīnid times. Right at the end of this passage and near the east corner of the funerary complex the spring of Shālla breaks to the surface of the ground, from where it irrigates the garden (Figure 7). Apart from this outlet, the natural water source of Shālla was utilised for a complex underground water system already in Roman times. Tunnels connected the source located south-west of the complex with a repository basin, the *nymphaeum*, and the Roman bathhouse — structures that surround the Marīnid funerary complex. Then the probably early Islamic ablution basin (Figure 2/B), and later the basin of the Marīnid madrasa (O) and the two ablution buildings (V and Q) were incorporated into the subterranean water system. The spring near the east corner of the funerary complex seems to be a natural outlet, which would have irrigated the garden already in the Marīnid period.

39. Ruggles. *Islamic gardens*, pp. 105-106.

40. The modern garden was designed by Jules Borély, a French would-be archaeologist, who dug up the madrasa and some other structures; Antoine Pietrobelli. "Chella mystérieux ou l'archéologie d'un paysage". *Horizons Maghrébins*, 45 (2001), pp. 116-129.

41. "*Wa-hiya muttaṣilatun bi-hādhihī l-qubbati l-jadīdati mujāwiratun minhā li-l-rawḍati l-saʿīdati madrasatun...*"; Ibn al-Ḥājj al-Numayrī. *Fayḍ al-ʿubāb wa-ifāḍat qidāḥ al-ādāb fī l-ḥaraka al-saʿīda ilā Qasanṭīna wa-l-Zāb*. Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990, p. 199.

42. "*...Al-bustānu wa-uqīma bi-qiblatihā...*"; al-Numayrī. *Fayḍ al-ʿubāb*, p. 199. The only MS of this work is unfortunately fragmented, with major parts missing from this folio, but I have confirmed the editor's reading by consulting the original MS; al-Khizāna al-Ḥasanīya, Rabat, MS 3267, p. 59.



Figure 6. Passage leading to the garden of Shālla, parallel with the north-east wall of the funerary complex. Photo by the author.

Turning now to what impression Shālla made upon its visitors, one ought to consider a poem by Ibn al-Khaṭīb, which he recited when he first visited the grave of Abū l-Ḥasan:

> There is a garden with fragrance diffusing,
> birds singing and trees with branches weighed down […]
> The rain pours on the place, and then
> the flowers come to life because of its blessings. […]
> You (Abū l-Ḥasan) have placed it in the hands of God,
> and so divine decrees have became liable for its protection,
> You have replaced the transitory palace with an eternal
> dwelling place, beneath which its rivers flow[43].

43. *Rawḍun taʾarraja ʿarfuhū wa-tarannamat/aṭyāruhū wa-tahaddalat ashjāruhū/[...]/wa-l-ghaythu yaqlaʿu thumma taḥyā baʿdahū/fī l-rawḍi ʿan barakātihī azhāruhū/[...]/wa-taraktahū bi-yadi l-ilāhi wadīʿatan fa-taḍammanat laka ḥafẓahā aqdāruhā/ʿawwaḍta min dāri l-ghurūri bi-manzilin li-l-khuldi tajrī taḥtahū anhāruhū*; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Raqm al-ḥulal*, pp. 99-100.



Figure 7. Outlet of the spring near the east corner of the funerary complex. Photo by the author.

There are a number of interesting concepts in these few lines, including that God takes care of the garden. The sultan Abū Sālim also says in one of his letters to Ibn al-Khaṭīb: "May God pour the rain of his mercy and of his tenderness [on the tomb]!"[44]. The image of "trees with branches weighed down" is likely to allude to the descriptions of the fruit trees of paradise in the Qurʾān, and especially to the verse "the fruits of the two gardens [hanging] near" [Qur'ān, 55.54]. Even more relevant to the present subject is the expression "beneath which its rivers flow" in the poem, which is a recurrent Islamic way of describing paradise. It appears dozens of times in the Qur'ān, one of which has been quoted above: "Gardens of Eden, which [the faithful] will enter, beneath which rivers flow" [Qur'ān, 16.31]. Here Ibn al-Khaṭīb borrows the Qur'ānic expression, and yet the context of this line in the poem makes it clear that he talks not about paradise, but about Shālla and its garden.

44. "*...wa-saqāhū ghuyūtha raḥmatihī wa-ḥinānihī*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 87.

One may argue that the association between paradise and an Islamic garden is no more than a poetic trope routinely applied in Arabic literature as an expression of beauty. However, not only does Ibn al-Khaṭīb describe his personal perception of Shālla, but his poem also fits some of the physical features of the site: the Marīnids established their funerary complex and garden above the pre-existing water tunnels. That is, 'rivers' literally flowed beneath the funerary complex and its garden, just as below the Qur'ānic paradise. In addition, the layout of the passage next to the madrasa (Figure 6), with the spring and the garden at its end (Figure 7), coincides with the Islamic notion of the passage (*ṣirāṭ*) leading to the basin (*ḥawḍ*), from which the faithful can first taste the water of paradise. These features might well have influenced the visitors' experience at the Marīnid shrine, and thus enhanced its paradisiac association. Then the visitor, already impressed by the buildings and the garden, could also read the inscriptions on the buildings —although only a few of them survive today, those are relevant here. Amid some Qurʾānic verses on God's mercy and the afterlife, one finds the above-quoted verse about the gardens of Eden, beneath which rivers flow [Qur'ān, 16.31]. This verse is carved on the *qibla* wall of the mausoleum of Abū l-Ḥasan, behind which one can see the garden today, right where it was located already in the fourteenth century (Figure 3).

Ibn al-Khaṭīb recited the above-quoted poem at the grave of Abū l-Ḥasan at Shālla, expressing his actual feelings about the venue of the pious deceased, the royal shrine with its garden that he construed as a representation of paradise. Since Ibn al-Khaṭīb's interpretation apparently derived from features of the site, such as the underground 'rivers' and the inscriptions on the buildings, the poem seems to have expressed his cognitive perception rather than some generic tropes. And since we know that Ibn al-Khaṭīb worked at Shālla instructing other visitors, it is safe to assume that he was not alone in his paradisiac interpretation of the Marīnid shrine and its setting.

THE KAʿBA IN SHĀLLA

The Mosque of the Ḥarām in Mecca is the holiest place of Islam, in the centre of which the Kaʿba is located. This sanctuary, also known as the Ancient House, forms a rectangle c. 11 m x 12 m. Its four corners are called Yemeni Corner (c. to the south-west), Syrian Corner (c. to the north-west), 'Irāqī Corner (c. to the north-east), and Black Stone Corner (c. to the south-east). The door of the Kaʿba opens on its east wall c. 2 m from the Black Stone Corner, and the piece of wall between the door and the corner is called the Multazam ('to which people cleave'). The Ka'ba is robed in the Kiswa, traditionally made of black brocade embroidered with gold threads, and replaced annually. There is a semi-circular

wall named Ḥaṭīm or Ḥijr, c. 90 cm tall, opposite the north wall of the building. The first sanctuary is believed to have been built by the prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm), whose wife, Hagar (Ḥājar), and son, Ishmael (Ismā‘īl), are said to be buried in between the Ḥaṭīm and the Kaʿba. In front of its east wall a small domed building, the Maqām Ibrāhīm, marks the spot where Abraham allegedly stood. Behind that, c. 20 m from the Ka‘ba, is the sacred spring called Zamzam, which God miraculously generated for Hagar and Ishmael when they were about to die of thirst[45].

Mecca is the focus of the annual Islamic pilgrimage, the *ḥajj*. A number of specific rites, said to have derived from the tradition of the prophet Muḥammad, are connected with the Ka‘ba and its surroundings. The seven-fold circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) of the Ka‘ba includes kissing and touching the Black Stone corner and touching the Yemeni Corner, followed by cleaving to the Multazam and drinking from the Zamzam[46]. The Meccan pilgrimage is at the same time a visit to paradise, since, according to the Islamic tradition, Mecca is located there. In particular, the place between the Maqām Ibrāhīm and the Black Stone corner of the Ka‘ba is reportedly “a garden among the gardens of paradise”. The Yemeni Corner is said to be one of the gates of paradise, and the Zamzam allegedly stems from one of the subterranean rivers of paradise[47].

Local analogues of the Ka‘ba were set up in many places of the medieval Islamic world. According to sources —some of which go back to the Umayyad period— the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (built in 72/691-692) was erected as an alternative pilgrimage site intended to replace the one in Mecca[48]. The Abbasid caliph al-Mu‘taṣim (218/833-227/842) built a *ka‘ba* at Samarra where his soldiers could practice the rites of the *ḥajj*, and this building might well have been the one known today as ‘Qubbat al-Ṣulaybīya’[49]. The short-lived *imām* of the Qarmaṭī Shī‘ī sect, Abū l-Faḍl al-Majūsī (d. 319/931), is said to have been circumambula-

45. Arent J. Wensinck and Jacques Jomier. “Ka‘ba”. In *EI*[2]. vol. 4, pp. 317-322; O’Meara. *The Kaaba*.

46. O’Meara. *The Kaaba*.

47. Lange. *Paradise and hell*, pp. 267-274.

48. Amikam Elad. “Why did ‘Abd al-Malik build the dome of the rock? A re-examination of the Muslim sources”. In *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem* (Oxford Studies in Islamic Art IX). Ed. Jeremy Johns. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 241-308; *idem*. *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic worship. Holy places, ceremonies, pilgrimage*. Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 157-159; Lange. *Paradise and hell*, pp. 247-249. Although this question remains to be debated, for the purpose of the present argument, it is undeniable that some of the earliest sources mention this function of the Dome of the Rock.

49. Alastair Northedge. *The historical topography of Samarra*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2007, pp. 230-233.

ted by his followers[50], just as *ṣūfī* leaders were occasionally considered as living *ka'ba*s[51]. Some rites of the *ḥajj* were also performed —or at least conceived— in royal palaces, including the Fāṭimid ones of al-Mahdīya (completed by 308/921) and Cairo (after 362/973), and possibly also in the Norman Cappella Palatina in Palermo (c. 1140)[52]. Similar tendencies can be seen in popular culture: for instance, two fourteenth-century jurists, Ibn Taymīya (d. 728/1328) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīya (d. 751/1350), condemn the imitation of *ḥajj* rituals when visiting tombs[53]. In Edirne (Turkey), the so-called Eski Camii, built in the early fifteenth-century, incorporates a black stone in its *qibla* wall, which had allegedly come from the Ka'ba[54].

With regard to the eastern Islamic world, the tomb of Yūsuf al-Hamadānī (d. 535/1141) in Merv (Turkmenistan) was considered as "the Ka'ba of Khurāsān"[55]. The Quwwat al-Islām Mosque at Delhi is described as "the second al-Bayt al-Ma'mūr" (the celestial Ka'ba) in two of its inscriptions from the early fourteenth century[56]. The tomb of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ṭughluq (720/1320-725/1325) in the same city was decorated with pieces of the Kiswa[57]. The Tīmūrid ruler Ḥusayn Bāyqarā

50. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī. *Tārīkh al-Islām*. Ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1992, vol. 25, p. 15.

51. See Jocelyn Hendrickson. "Prohibiting the pilgrimage. Politics and fiction in mālikī *fatwās*". *Islamic Law and Society*, 23 (2016), pp. 162-164; Tamás Iványi. "On circumambulation in Chellah and elsewhere. Popular traditions, legal prohibitions". *The Arabist. Budapest Studies in Arabic*, 37 (2016), pp. 72-77; O'Meara. *The Kaaba*, passim.

52. Abū Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā ibn al-Ṭuwayr. *Nuzhat al-muqlatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn*. Ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992, pp. 208-209; Jonathan M. Bloom. *Arts of the City Victorious. Islamic art and architecture in Fatimid North Africa and Egypt*. Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2007, pp. 31-32; Jeremy Johns. "The Norman kings of Sicily and the Fatimid Caliphate". *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 15 (1993), pp. 152-153; *idem*. "Arabic inscriptions in the Cappella Palatina. Performativity, audience, legibility and illegibility." In *Viewing inscriptions in the late antique and medieval world*. Ed. Antony Eastmond. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 130-132.

53. Taqīy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymīya. *Majmū'at al-fatāwā*. Ed. 'Āmir al-Jazzār, and Anwar al-Bāz, al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Wafā', 2005, vol. 27, pp. 48, 55, 63-65, and passim; Abū 'Abdallāh ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīya. *Ighāthat al-lahfān fī masāyid al-Shayṭān*. Ed. Muḥammad 'Abdallāh Shams, Mecca: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, 1432AH, vol. 1, p. 220. See also Iványi. "On circumambulation in Chellah", pp. 88-89.

54. *Hikâye-i tabib Beşir Çelebi ve Tarih-i Edirne isimli yazma eser*. In *Doğumunun 65. yılında Prof. Dr. Tuncer Baykara'ya armağan tarih yazýlarý*. Ed. M. Akif Erdoğru. Istanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2006. 185-189; Gülru Necipoğlu. *The age of Sinan. Architectural culture in the Ottoman Empire*. London: Reaktion Books, 2005, p. 241.

55. *The tadhkiratu 'sh-shu'ará (Memoirs of the poets)*. Ed./tr. Edward G. Browne. Leiden: Brill, 1901, p. 95.

56. James P. Page. *An historical memoir on the Qutb. Delhi*. Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1926, pp. 36, 38.

57. *The futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi*. Ed. Azra Alavi. Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 2009, p. 30; Mehrdad Shokoohy and Natalie H. Shokoohy. "The tomb of Ghiyāth al-Dīn at Tughluqabad: Pisé architecture of Afghanistan translated into stone in Delhi". In *Cairo to Kabul. Afghan and Islamic*

(873/1469-911/1506) promoted the newly recovered grave attributed to the *imām*-caliph ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) at Mazar-i Sharif (Afghanistan) as a pilgrimage site alternative to Mecca[58]. The mausoleum of Aḥmad al-Yasawī (d. 562/1166) in Turkestan (Kazakhstan) was described in 915/1509 as "the Kaʻba of Turkestan", and some rites of the *ḥajj* including the circumambulation were performed there[59]. The so-called Masjid-i Shāh in Mashhad (Iran) was, according to its mid-fifteenth-century inscriptions, an analogue of the Kaʻba[60], and later the Ṣafavid shāh ʻAbbās I (995/1587-1038/1629) intended to replace Mecca and the Kaʿba with Mashhad and the shrine of *imām* ʻAlī l-Riḍā (d. 203/818) as the pilgrims' *ḥajj* destination[61]. These examples, among numerous others, testify that many places envied the popularity and sanctity of Mecca in the pre-modern Islamic world. As demonstrated below, Shālla was one of such places.

Before turning to this aspect of Shālla, it should first be discussed briefly how the Marīnid burial site developed into a funerary complex and a centre of pilgrimage. It began after Abū l-Ḥasan established the first known mausoleum over the grave of his father, Abū Saʻīd (710/1310-731/1331). In Ibn al-Khaṭīb's words, Abū l-Ḥasan

stopped at the protected place on the sacred river,
and conceived a mausoleum fitting its environment,
a place of reverence with enormous sanctity,
and he envisioned to make its visitors satisfied[62].

This very short summary of Abū l-Ḥasan's initial patronage agrees with what we know from the more detailed account of the sultan's private secretary, Ibn Marzūq al-Tilimsānī (d. 781/1379), about the earliest Marīnid building known to have been erected in Shālla:

studies presented to Ralph H. Pinder-Wilson. Ed. Warwick Ball and Leonard Harrow. London: Melisende, 2002, p. 212.

58. Maria E. Subtelny. *Timurids in transition. Turko-Persian politics and acculturation in medieval Iran*. Leiden: Brill, 2007, pp. 212-214.

59. *Idem*, p. 194.

60. Lisa Golombek and Donald Newton Wilber. *The Timurid architecture of Iran and Turan.* Priceton: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 336.

61. Charles Melville. "Shah Abbas and the pilgrimage to Mashhad". In *Safavid Persia. The history and politics of an Islamic society*. Ed. Charles Melville. London: I. B. Tauris, 1996, pp. 215-217.

62. *ʿAraja ʿalā l-wādī l-muqaddasi wa-l-ḥimā/wa-aqṣada ḍarīḥan lā yukhību jiwārahū/wa-maqāma birrin ʿaẓumat ḥurmātuhū/wa-khtāla fī khalʿi l-riḍā zuwwārahū*; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Raqm al-ḥulal*, p. 98.

> [Abū l-Ḥasan] transferred [Abū Sa'īd's corpse] to the burial place of his ancestors — may God be contented with them— in Shālla in front of the fortified [city of] Salā, which is a place well-known for its blessing and intended for that[63].
> [Abū l-Ḥasan] established [his father's] honoured mausoleum, allocated many salaries, and organised Qur'ān-readings over his grave, day and night, without stopping. Whosoever seeks refuge at his tomb, and whosoever fears or is in need of something, their fear extinguishes, and their need and request become fulfilled there[64].
> Out of respect towards [his father], [Abū l-Ḥasan] established visitation at [Abū Saʿīd's] honoured tomb, and I (Ibn Marzūq) have visited it several times with him, and repeatedly took journeys to visit the place in his company[65].

Prior to the death of Abū Sa'īd, no primary source mentions any building activity at Shālla in the Marīnid period, but then Ibn Marzūq leaves no doubt that Abū l-Ḥasan founded a mausoleum for his father, whose corpse he had transferred to Shālla. Not only did the sultan encourage people to visit the dynastic shrine, and, for that reason, trumpeted its sacredness and blessings, but he himself also visited it repeatedly. The activities initiated by Abū l-Ḥasan were retained under Abū 'Inān, who organised ceremonial funerals in the complex. He first buried his mother, Shams al-Ḍuḥā, in 750/1349 in Abū l-Ḥasan's mausoleum, and her epitaph mentions that "people came to be present at her funeral from among the nobles of the east as well as the west"[66]. Similarly, Ibn al-Ḥājj al-Numayrī reports on the funeral of al-Ḥurra al-Mu'aẓẓama, the daughter of Abū l-Ḥasan, that masses of people were coming from Fez to Shālla for paying respect to the deceased in 755/1354[67].

Abū l-Ḥasan and Abū 'Inān certainly boosted the popularity of Shālla by their official visitations and the ceremonial funerals, and thus established the main function of the site. Then, after Abū 'Inān's death in 759/1358, although the direct

63. *Naqalahū ilā mawḍiʿi madfani aslāfihī —raḍiya llāhu ʿanhum— bi-Shāllata min ẓāhiri Salā l-muḥawwaṭati, wa-huwa mawḍiʿun maʿrūfun bi-l-barakati [wa-]maqṣūdun li-dhālika*"; Muḥammad ibn Marzūq al-Tilimsānī. *Al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ al-ḥasan fī maʾāthir wa-maḥāsin mawlānā Abī l-Ḥasan*. Ed. María J. Viguera. Algiers: al-Sharika al-Waṭanīya li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1981, p. 124. It is noteworthy that Ibn Marzūq describes Shālla as being located at Salā, which conforms with what I have noted about Ibn al-Khaṭīb's use of 'Salā'.

64. *...qiyāmuhū bi-ḍarīḥihī l-mukrami wa-ijrāʾuhū ʿalayhī l-jarāyāti l-kathīrata wa-tartībuhū l-qurrāʾa li-l-qirāʾati ʿalā qabrihī laylan wa-nahāran lā yafturūna. wa-man lajaʾa li-qabrihī min khāʾifin aw ṭālibi ḥājatin umina khawfuhū wa-quḍiyat ḥājatuhū wa-ṭalabatuhū*; Ibn Marzūq. *Al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ*, p. 247.

65. *Wa-min birrihī bi-hī taʿāhuduhū qabrahū l-mukrama bi-l-ziyārati, fa-zurnāhū maʿhū marrātin, wa-aʿmalnā l-riḥlata ṣaḥbatahū li-ziyāratihī karrātin*; Ibn Marzūq. *Al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ*, p. 247.

66. "*Wa-man wafada li-ḥuḍūri dafnihā min aʿyāni l-Mashriqi wa-l-Maghribi*"; see *Maroc médiéval*, no. 310.

67. Al-Numayrī. *Fayḍ al-ʿubāb*, p. 197. The year is not mentioned in the text, but some of the described events can be dated to 755/1354.

royal patronage of architecture and the official visitations ceased, one can infer from the writings of Ibn al-Khaṭīb that the activities continued, and that the popularity of Shālla was maintained for a while. Most detailed is Ibn al-Khaṭīb's report on the feast of *Laylat al-Qadr* or the Night of Destiny, which is the 27th night of Ramaḍān in the Islamic calendar. The significance of the date is that the revelation of the Qur'ān allegedly began that night when the prophet Muḥammad received the first *sūra* or chapter of the Book from God. Shālla had its own annual feast that day, on which Ibn al-Khaṭīb reports as follows:

> Darkness spread on the 27th night [of Ramaḍān], one of the feast days of Shālla, when people arrive, pitch tents, and crowd the markets, and the uncanonical taxes are waived. The banquet took place at the mausoleum [complex] for the notables and the group leaders. Then the people gathered for the habitual almsgiving, lambs' necks were cut, and containers (?) of oil were piled up. Communities of confectioners were invited, and there were many fires [for cooking]. The singers were led to the hall, which was prepared for the music event next to that[68].

This account on a pilgrimage banquet at Shālla suggests, once again, a significant number of visitors at the site. There were several other annual feasts in Shālla, and we know from the *ṣūfī* scholar Ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī (d. 792/1390) that the markets of Shālla, held twice a year, were reputedly popular around this time[69].

Following the description of the banquet, Ibn al-Khaṭīb continues with a poem recited in Shālla, that hints at how the visitors conceived the place: "It satisfies me to adopt myself to [Shālla]; so that its Zamzam is my tears, and my body is its Ḥaṭīm"[70]. Given that both the Zamzam and the Ḥaṭīm are parts of the Ka'ba and its surroundings, this is an unmistakable reference to the holiest place of Islam[71].

68. *Wa-aẓallat laylatu sabʿa wa-ʿishrīna iḥdā mawāsimi Shāllata l-mukhtaṣṣati bi-stijlābi l-umami wa-takhyīmi l-khiyami wa-ḥtifāli l-aswāqi wa-rafʿi l-maghārimi wa-l-walīmati li-ahli l-khayri wa-ūlā l-hayʾāti bi-l-ḍarīḥi fa-ḥtafala muʿtādu l-iṭʿāmi wa-furriqat ghalāṣimu l-bahmi wa-uhīlat qanāqishu l-samni wa-studiʿat aṣnāfu l-ḥalwāʾi wa-stukthira mina l-wuqūdi wa-studʿiya ilā l-īwāni liṣqahā l-muʿaddi li-dhālika l-mughannūna…*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, pp. 122–123.

69. Abū 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī. *Al-Rasāʾil al-kubrā al-musammā nuzhat al-nāzir al-mutaʾammil wa-qayd al-sāʾir al-mustaʿjil*. Ed. Muḥammad ibn 'Azzāz. Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2011, p. 248. In one of his letters, the author mentions a decrease in the popularity of the markets at Shālla. He lived in Salé twice: first from c. 1359 for a few years, and then after 1370, and he wrote his letters during his second sojourn; Paul Nwiya. "Ibn ʿAbbād". In *EI*[2]. vol. 3, pp. 670-671. This means that he must have witnessed the heyday of the markets of Shālla around 1360, and their decay in the early 1370s.

70. "*Wa-yuqniʿunī annī bihī mutakayyifun, fa-Zamzamuhū damʿī wa-jismī Ḥaṭīmuhū*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 123.

71. The assumed connection between the spring of Shālla and the Zamzam reappears in the biography of Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Manṣūr al-Yazīdī (d. 1004/1595), whose tomb at Shālla is still

In addition, this suggests that the visitors could achieve a symbolic unification with Shālla, which is notably the same as what pilgrims would do at the Ḥaṭīm of the Ka'ba[72]. Ibn al-Khaṭīb says elsewhere about Shālla that "the domes of sovereignty have been robed in the curtains of the noble Ka'ba, and the dresses of the Ancient House have cloaked the garments of the *imāms*"[73]. That is, pieces of the Kiswa are said to have been hung at the royal mausolea of Shālla. The same author mentions in one of his letters to Abū Sālim that "your lord (Abū l-Ḥasan), oh my lord (Abū Sālim), is the *qibla* of my face"[74]. This note fits the layout of the funerary complex as the mausoleum of Abū l-Ḥasan (Figure 2/G) is situated on the *qibla* side of the mosque (A), so that the people would pray towards the tomb. And this sentence again associates the funerary complex with the Ka'ba, that is, the real *qibla*.

The link between Mecca and Shālla is corroborated by the rites performed at the latter site. Ibn al-Khaṭīb says in a poem that "[Shālla's] pilgrimage rites (*manāsik*) are always followed, its corner is touched/and its appearance makes people shed tears"[75]. The Arabic term *manāsik* means specifically the pilgrimage rites of the *ḥajj*, nevertheless Ibn al-Khaṭīb applies this term to Shālla, thereby suggesting that the pilgrims of Shālla imitated those in Mecca, especially because he adds that they touched a corner. Absorbing blessing by touching a sacred spot is not uncommon in Islamic culture; it was practiced, for instance, at the tomb of Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130) in Tīnmal in the Atlas Mountains[76]. But touching the *corner* of a building is a specific rite that pilgrims do during the *ṭawāf*, the circumambulation around the Ka'ba, particularly at its Black Stone and the Yemeni Corners. It is therefore inferable that some of the rites performed at Shālla derived from those of the Meccan pilgrimage.

known today by the name of "al-Ḥasan imām"; see Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥājj al-Ifrānī. *Ṣafwat man intashara min akhbār ṣulaḥāʾ al-qarn al-ḥādī al-ʿashara*. Ed. ʿAbd al-Majīd Khayālī. Casablanca: Markaz al-Turāth al-Thaqāfī al-Maghribī, 2004, pp. 67 (note nº 5), p. 104.

72. O'Meara. *The Kaaba*. As O'Meara demonstrates, the Ḥaṭīm is a part of the Kaʿba through which the pilgrims could unify with the building.

73. "*Wa-l-mulku qad kusiyat bi-astāri l-Kaʿbati l-sharīfati qibābuhū; wa-l-baytu l-ʿatīqu qad alḥafati l-malāḥifa l-imāmīyata athwābuhū*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, pp. 91-92.

74. "*Fa-mawlāka yā-mawlāya qiblatu wajhī*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 101.

75. "*Tuqḍā manāsikuhū wa-yumsaku ruknuhū/abadan wa-tuqdhifu li-l-dumūʿi jihāruhū*"; Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Raqm al-ḥulal*, p. 98.

76. This rite is attested by a letter written in the name of the Almohad caliph ʿAbd al-Muʾmin (524/1130-558/1163) in 552/1157; *Majmūʿ rasāʾil Muwaḥḥidīya min inshāʾ kuttāb al-dawla al-muʾminīya*. Ed. Évariste Lévi-Provençal. Rabat: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Iqtiṣādīya, 1941, nº 17, p. 86; see also Pascal Buresi. "Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdī Ibn Tūmart à Tinmāl". In *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, janvier–mars 2008*. Paris: De Boccard, 2010, p. 416.

The historical circumstances provide ample explanation for the phenomenon presented above. Jocelyn Hendrickson has recently demonstrated that jurists of the Mālikī school of law, the one followed by the Marīnids, from time to time discouraged or even prohibited performing the *ḥajj* to Mecca. Such religious opinions were arguably fuelled by rulers who were keen to keep their people within their territory[77]. Undertaking the *ḥajj* was precarious during the early Marīnid times for the inimical relations with the Zayyānids (633/1236-963/1556) of Tlemcen. Thus the initial phase of turning Shālla into a pilgrimage site after 731/1331 coincides with the period when people could have hardly reached Mecca from Morocco. This situation, however, changed significantly after the Marīnid conquest of Tlemcen in 737/1337. Sources describe this event as the key to reopen the *ḥajj* route, as well as to resume diplomatic relations between the Marīnids and the Mamlūks of Cairo (648/1250-923/1517). Indeed, the daughter of Abū l-Ḥasan went on pilgrimage in 738/1338, and returned home with lavish gifts from the Mamlūk sultan, including pieces of the Kiswa of the Ka'ba[78]. Hence when Ibn al-Khaṭīb says about Shālla that "the domes of sovereignty have been robed in the curtains of the noble Ka'ba", it is likely that he is describing an actual practice at the site.

With the pilgrimage route to Mecca now re-opened, the Marīnid sultans apparently would have rather seen their subjects staying in their realm. Therefore, they established several buildings at the formerly modest burial site in order to make it become a pilgrimage centre, and also referred to and adopted rites from the holiest place of Islam. Similarly, the official royal celebrations of the *mawlid*, the birthday of the prophet Muḥammad, reached great splendour under Abū l-Ḥasan[79]. The *mawlid* was not only a way of demonstrating the sultan's piety, but,

77. Hendrickson. "Prohibiting the pilgrimage", pp. 161-238. One such jurist was the fourteenth-century Andalusī Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Maḥsūd, as mentioned by Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Wansharīsī. *Al-Miʿyār al-muʿrib wa-l-jāmiʿ al-mughrib ʿan fatāwī ahl Ifrīqiya wa-l-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*. Ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, Aḥmad al-Sharqāwī Iqbāl and Muḥammad al-ʿArāʾishī. Rabat: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmīya, 1981-1983, vol. 1, p. 432.

78. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn. *Kitāb al-ʿibar wa-dīwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿArab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-Barbar wa-man ʿāṣarahum min dhawī al-sulṭān al-akbar*. Cairo and Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī and Dār al-Kitāb al-Libnānī, 1999, vol. 13, pp. 467-471; Shams al-Dīn al-Shujāʿī. *Tārīkh al-malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-awlādih*. Ed. Barbara Schäfer. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977, pp. 29-30; Ṭaqīy al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī. *Al-Sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*. Ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīya, vol. 3, pp. 242-243. See also Marius Canard. "Les relations entre les Mérinides et les Mamelouks au XIVe siècle". *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales* (Algiers), (1939-1941), pp. 41-81; Doris Behrens-Abouseif. *Practicing diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate. Gifts and material culture in the medieval Islamic world*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 52-57.

79. Ibn Marzūq. *al-Musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ*. pp. 152-154. See also Ibn al-Khaṭīb. *Nufāḍat al-jirāb*, vol. 2, p. 84, with a mention of celebrating the *mawlid* at Shālla.

as James Brown convincingly argues, also one of the means by which the Marīnids “translated the sanctity of the holy sites of the Hijaz and the authority of the intellectual centres of the east to the Islamic west.” Indeed, as Brown continues, “the *mawlid*, with its attendant poetry and descriptions of the Prophet’s biography and character, was particularly resonant as a kind of compensation for the difficulty of visiting the actual sites of his life[80]. In this context, anchoring the Marīnid funerary complex as an analogue of the Kaʿba was both desirable in order to enhance the cult at the dynastic shrine, as well as logical for the political interest of discouraging people from the risky journey to Mecca. Some of Shālla’s visitors, as one can tell from the accounts of Ibn al-Khaṭīb, understood the references to the Kaʿba and the *ḥajj*, and acted accordingly.

CONCLUSIONS

The written sources for Marīnid Shālla leave no doubt that it was a pre-eminent pilgrimage site, especially between 731/1331 and 763/1362. Ibn al-Khaṭīb is one of the authors who do not spare ink when they can praise the sanctity of the site, and he demonstrates that it was not completely deprived of royal patronage after Abu ‘Inān’s death in 759/1358. The facts that Ibn al-Khaṭīb lived mainly there between 761/1360 and 763/1362 and received a salary from the Marīnid court mean that the sultans were far from being averse to maintaining the dynastic shrine. Even ceremonies such as the feast of ‘the Night of Destiny’ suggest royal patronage. The question is why people regarded Shālla as a sacred place, on which Ibn al-Khaṭīb reveals two aspects of the royal funerary complex: it was perceived, by some of its visitors, as an analogue of the Ka‘ba as well as of paradise, at least during this short period. Nonetheless, we have seen that Mecca is believed to belong to, or to be part of, paradise, and, indeed, these two associations are interrelated at Shālla as well. The imitation of the sanctuary of the Ka‘ba and the rites of the *ḥajj* could also have served to emphasise the paradisiac imagery of the Marīnid funerary complex and its garden. In that manner, these two perceptions of Shālla would have merged together and contributed significantly to its main ‘*work*’, namely, suggesting to the visitors that it was a sacred place, and, thereby, that the pious Marīnid sultans deserved reverence both in life and in death.

80. James Brown. “ʿAzafid Ceuta, *mawlid al-nabī* and the development of Marīnid strategies of legitimation”. In *The articulation of power in medieval Iberia and the Maghrib*. Ed. Amira K. Bennison. Oxford: Oxford University Press, The British Academy, 2014, p. 140.

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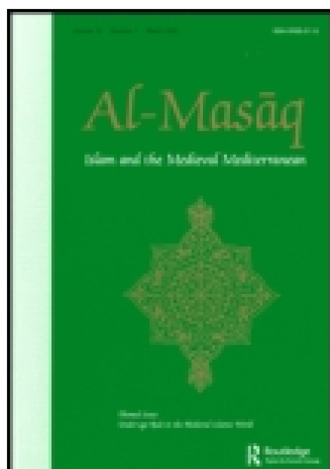
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Sultans' Paradise: The Royal Necropolis of Shāla, Rabat

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Sultans' Paradise: The Royal Necropolis of Shāla, Rabat[1]

PÉTER TAMÁS NAGY

ABSTRACT *The following study concerns Shāla, which was the necropolis of the Marīnid rulers from 683/1284 to 752/1351. The Islamic buildings on the site have rarely received scholarly attention, although these edifices – despite their delapidated condition – are among the most important constructed by the dynasty. One of my main aims is to re-establish the buildings' chronological sequence, using the written and archaeological evidence, including publications about the site written in Arabic, which have hardly been considered so far. I also address the meaning and aims behind structure erected for each founder, which, in my view, have been misinterpreted by previous scholarship. In summary, this article attempts to revise our knowledge about the site.*

Keywords: Architecture – secular; Africa; Morocco – architecture; Rabat; Morocco – Shāla necropolis; Marīnids; Berber dynasty; Architectural patronage – in Africa

When surveying the architecture of the Marīnids, the dynasty that ruled the western Maghrib between 668/1269 and 870/1465, one may be momentarily surprised by this monumental complex. Set beside the Bū Regreg River in Rabat, Shāla (misleadingly spelt Chella) is an irregular pentagonal site, surrounded by a ca. 1 km long wall (Figure 1) with apparently Roman ruins and Islamic structures within. Despite being referred to as the "Marīnid necropolis", the size of the enclosure suggests more than a few tombs and the way the whole area was used is not clear to us. However, my main goal in the following study is to concentrate on the chronology, meaning and function of the Marīnid *khalwa* or religious complex, as it was intended to be used by the various patrons.

The Banū Marīn tribe of Zanāta Berber origin lived semi-nomadically in the area of what is today eastern Morocco until the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century. Then they gradually began fighting against the Almohad dynasty (541–668/1147–1269) under the leadership of ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq (d. 614/1217), Abū Saʿīd I (d. 638/1240), Abū Maʿrūf (d. 642/1244) and Abū Yaḥyā (d. 656/1258). The real founder of the Marīnid dynasty, Abū Yūsuf (r. 656–685/1258–1286),

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[1] I wish to thank Gabriella Sárváry for correcting the English of my draft. I would also like to express my gratitude to my former professor, Iván Szántó, from whom I have received several comments and advice, and finally to Máté Horváth for his careful checking of my Arabic translations.



Figure 1. Shāla, general view (all photographs are by the author)

conquered the Almohad capital, Marrakesh, in 668/1269 and also led several campaigns against the Christian powers of Spain and Portugal. Abū l-Ḥasan (r. 731–752/1331–1351) also attempted *jihād* against Christians, but with little success. In 741/1340, the united Christian armies defeated the Muslims in the battle of Tarifa (also known as battle of Río Salado). Further expansionist aims eastwards were more successful. In 1348, Abū l-Ḥasan led a campaign against the Maghrib and conquered it as far as Tripoli. While he was fighting in North Africa, his son, Abū ʿInān (r. 749–759/1348–1358), gathered his own army and usurped the throne. Abū l-Ḥasan had no alternative but to return Morocco, and his life ended in the civil war that followed. Abū ʿInān was the last powerful Marīnid ruler to establish splendid monuments. After him, the sultans became the puppets of their viziers.[2] As we shall see, this first half of the Marīnid era was also the heyday of architectural patronage in Shāla.

All Marīnid buildings on the site are within the *khalwa*, except for a bath and a residential building near the main gate. The *khalwa* forms a rectangle ca. 44 m long and 29 m wide (for a site plan see Figure 2). The walls are still several metres high but no roof can be seen *in situ*. The main gate opens on the north-western wall about one third along from the right (no. 1), leading the visitor to an L-shaped courtyard (no. 2). Proceeding forward, one finds a mosque (no. 4) and a well for ablutions (no. 3). The mosque has two doors on either side of the *miḥrāb*, leading to the funerary court, where the *qubba*s or mausolea (nos 5–9) are situated. The north-eastern part of the *khalwa* contains a rectangular courtyard (no. 10), alternatively called *zāwiya* (*ṣūfī* convent) or *madrasa*, and a prayer hall (no. 11).

Islamic Shāla first received scholarly attention more than 90 years ago, when Muḥammad Būjandār introduced the site to Arabic readers.[3] Then Henri

[2] For an introduction to the history of the Marīnids see Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 120–37.

[3] Muḥammad Būjandār al-Rabāṭī, *Shāla wa-āthāru-hā: Kitāb fī tārīkh zāwiyat Shāla bi-l-Rabāṭ wa-waṣf āthāri-hā fī-l-qadīm wa-l-ḥadīth* (Rabāṭ: Maṭbaʿat al-Jarīda al-Rasmiyya, 1340AH).

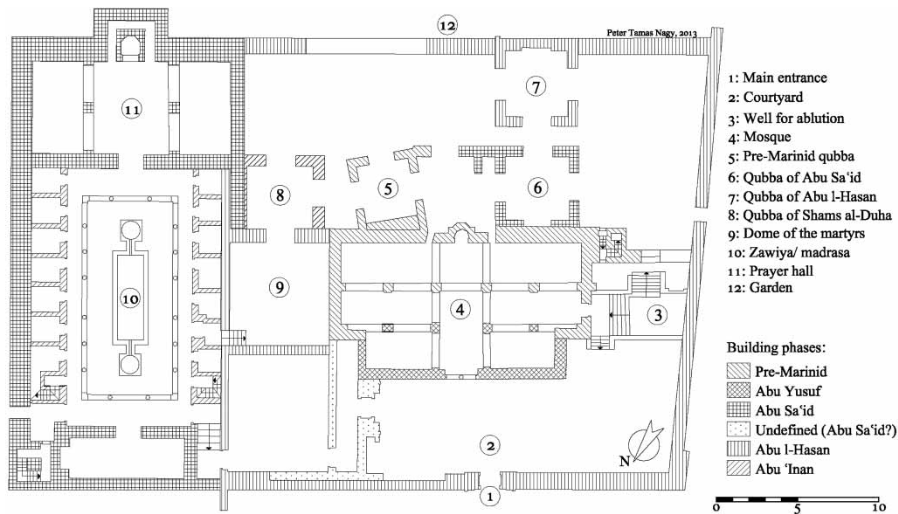


Figure 2. General plan and proposed chronology of the *khalwa*

Basset and Évariste Lévi-Provençal published three articles on its Islamic structures.[4] They stated that the rectangular complex (*khalwa*) had been built by two main patrons: Abū Yūsuf and Abū l-Ḥasan, and they attributed two mosques to them (nos 4 and 11, respectively). They also identified the Marīnid mausolea with their owners and discovered a communal funerary hall (no. 9), which had presumably been constructed for the previous rulers by Abū l-Ḥasan. Their general interpretation of Shāla states that the *mujāhid* (one who wages *jihād*) rulers of the Marīnid dynasty founded their necropolis in the form of a *ribāṭ* or fortress. The main intent – according to this view – was so that their subjects would revere them as *jihād* warriors. Georges Marçais accepted this opinion, supporting it by referring to earlier examples, when areas around *ribāṭ*s had been used as cemeteries.[5]

We have since – thanks largely to ʿUthmān ʿUthmān Ismāʿīl – acquired a more comprehensive understanding of the Islamic history of Shāla.[6] He re-examined the written sources that refer to the site, carried out excavations in some parts of the *khalwa*, and introduced us to Shāla as a city active from the time of the Idrīsid dynasty (172–375/788–985). He also pointed out several of Basset and Lévi-Provençal's misinterpretations, but despite his manifest opposition to the scholarship of the colonial period, he did pick up their notion about the "*jihādist*" significance of Shāla in Marīnid times.

[4] Henri Basset and Évariste Lévi-Provençal, "Chella: Une nécropole mérinide", *Hespéris: Archives Berbères et Bulletin de l'Institut des Hautes-Études Marocaines* 2 (1922): 1–92, 255–316, 385–425.

[5] Georges Marçais, *L'Architecture musulmane d'occident: Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc, Espagne et Sicile* (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1955), pp. 281–4.

[6] For the history, see ʿUthmān ʿUthmān Ismāʿīl, *Tārīkh Shāla al-Islāmiyya: Ṣafḥāt jadīda fī tārīkh al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā min ʿaṣr al-Adārisa ilā nihāyat ʿaṣr al-Marīniyyīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1390/1975); for the excavations, see *idem*, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla al-Islāmiyya: Abḥāth tārīkhiyya wa-kushūf athariyya bi-l-Maghrib al-Aqṣā* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1978). Finally a third volume, despite its title, is mostly about Shāla: *idem*, *Dirāsāt jadīda fī l-funūn al-Islāmiyya wa-l-nuqūsh al-ʿArabiyya bi-l-Maghrib al-Aqṣā* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, n.d.).

Since, to my knowledge, no archaeological investigation of the existing monuments has been thoroughly carried out,[7] dating problems sometimes obstruct the work of interpretation, so I shall present the chronological sequence of the buildings on the basis of, though not always in agreement with, the works of Ismāʿīl.[8]

As for the meaning of the site, we can only begin by examining the century-old "*jihādist*" interpretation of Basset and Lévi-Provençal. It was based on the historical context of a time when several Marīnid rulers crossed the Strait of Gibraltar to fight against Christians. Although the Marīnid rulers were undeniably honoured for centuries, the main weakness of the two scholars' notion is their inability to prove that they were buried in Shāla because of their identity as *mujāhid*s or whether this was the original and only intention of all persons buried there. The historical and archaeological sources on the site give no direct answer to these questions, even though scholarship on Shāla has never called this interpretation into doubt.[9]

Abū Yūsuf and the foundation of the Marīnid necropolis

The main reason for questioning the aforementioned "*jihadist*" notion arises from the fact that Abū Yūsuf first entombed his wife, al-Ḥurra Umm al-ʿIzz in Shāla in 683/1284.[10] The historical sources also reveal the existence of a mosque on the site,[11] erroneously identified by Basset and Lévi-Provençal with the prayer hall (Figure 3, no. 11) attached to the *zāwiya* or *madrasa* (no. 10, see below). As a matter of fact, the only mosque in Shāla that probably goes back to Idrīsid times is in the southern part of the complex (Figure 4, no. 4).[12] Then the ruler's own burial on the site followed.[13] His tomb has been identified with the remains in the prayer hall of the mosque, which was also extended with the addition of a third aisle by Abū Yūsuf.[14]

The architectural patronage of the Marīnid dynasty was influenced by the fact that the new leadership did not possess any religious authority. The search for legitimacy

[7] The most recent archaeological study to my knowledge is an unpublished work: Moulay Driss Sedra, "La nécropole de Chella, étude historique et archéologique de deux monuments: La mosquée et la madrasa". Since this study was not available to me, I could only obtain some information through references to it: Riyaz Mansur Latif, "Ornate Vision of Knowledge and Power: Formation of Marinid Madrasas in Maghrib al-Aqsā", PhD Thesis, University of Minnesota, 2011. For the most recent introduction to Shāla, see Lamia Hadda and Luciana Jacobelli, *Le Parc archéologique de Chella* (Naples: L'Isola dei Ragazzi, 1998).

[8] For the chronology of the site, see building phases in Figure 2. This is based on my own surveys on the site, but, admittedly, more remains to be done.

[9] Although commemorative sites for *mujāhid*s were built in various parts of the Islamic world, the fact that such an idea was widespread does not in itself mean that this was the case in Shāla. For a survey of the mausolea of *mujāhid*s, see Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 263–6.

[10] ʿAlī b. Abī Zarʿ al-Fāsī (d. after 726/1326), *Al-anīs al-muṭrib bi-rawḍ al-qirṭās fī akhbār mulūk al-Maghrib wa-tārīkh madīnat Fās*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Binmanṣūr (Rabat: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Mulkiyya, 1420/1999), p. 537.

[11] Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, 492; Ismāʿīl, *Tārīkh Shāla*, 310–11.

[12] Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 163–89. For the mosque's history, see *ibid*, 307–32.

[13] Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, 492; Abū l-Walīd Ismāʿīl b. al-Aḥmar (d. 808/1406), *Rawḍat al-niṣrīn fī dawlat Banī Marīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Binmanṣūr (Rabat: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Mulkiyya, 1382/1962), p. 18.

[14] Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 307–24, 368–73.



Figure 3. The *zāwiya-madrasa* of Shāla with its prayer hall

as Morocco's rightful rulers can be detected in various building projects, which partly continued the well-established tradition of previous dynasties, as exemplified by the foundation of a dynastic capital. In other cases, the rulers incorporated foreign types of building in their patronage, the most splendid examples being the *madrasas*.[15] Another tool was undeniably the practice of *jihād*, but nothing necessitates a connection between this and their necropolis; these princely tools were simply aimed at making them accepted as rightful rulers.

Another point worth mentioning is the burial of two Marīnid princes who preceded Abū Yūsuf. ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, the ancestor and first warrior of the dynasty, was buried at a locality called Tāfarṭast. His tomb was most probably without any architectural significance until Abū Yūsuf repaired it and founded a *zāwiya* attached to it.[16] This action marks the conscious development of the site as a place of veneration, which was undeniably the achievement of Abū Yūsuf. On the other hand, it did not make ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq more like a *jihād* warrior, but only a religious hero and the respected founder of the dynasty.[17] The burial of another Marīnid leader, Abū Yaḥyā, is even more interesting in the present context. He desired to be buried at the Bāb al-Jīziyyīn of Fès in the vicinity of the tomb of a saint, Muḥammad al-Fashtālī, in order to receive the latter's *baraka* or blessing.[18] This meant that he had not attributed any sanctity to himself, although he had his own pious goal.

Being constructed inside a mosque, the first two Marīnid tombs in Shāla were built to receive veneration, probably for the authority of the interred deceased;

[15] Marçais, *L'Architecture musulmane*, 284–6; Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 239–40. See also Maya Shatzmiller, "Les premiers Mérinides et le milieu religieux de Fès: L'introduction des médersas", *Studia Islamica* 43 (1976): 109–18.

[16] Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, 491; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khaldūn al-Maghribī (d. 808/1406), *Kitāb al-ʿibar wa-dīwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿArab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-Barbar wa-man ʿāṣarahum min dhawī l-sulṭān al-akbar*, volumes I–XIV (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī/Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1420/1999), XIII: 435.

[17] Ibn al-Aḥmar informs us about this *baraka* in detail, which probably means that by the time of his writing in 806–807/1404, this had been accepted and well-known; Ibn al-Aḥmar, *Rawḍat al-nisrīn*, 15.

[18] Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, 387.

this is all that we can say with certainty about Abū Yūsuf's intention. By conquering and unifying Morocco and part of Andalusia, Abū Yūsuf did indeed change the previous concept of a ruler. He was a powerful sovereign and a great builder, who founded a place of veneration for his own family and also for his father, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq. The idea of commemorating the sultan was maintained under the following rulers: Abū Yaʿqūb (r. 685–706/1286–1307),[19] Abū Thābit (r. 706–708/1307–1308),[20] Abū Saʿīd II (r. 710–731/1310–1331),[21] and finally Abū l-Ḥasan,[22] who – according to written sources – were all buried in Shāla.

The remaining question about Shāla's early Marīnid use concerns the site's locus, for it is hard to accept that Abū Yūsuf desired to rest close to the places from which *mujāhid*s had set out, Rabat and Salé. Here we need to look back to Shāla's pre-Marīnid history, when it was a vigorous city, not a Roman town that had been in ruins for many centuries.[23]

The Roman site of Sala Colonia was never abandoned; the written sources explored by Ismāʿīl show continuous habitation throughout the centuries from ancient times. The Idrīsid dynasty had an important town here, and then the Banū Yafran Berber tribe established their state's capital in Shāla in the fourth–fifth/tenth–eleventh centuries. There is evidence of continuous occupation in the Almoravid (454–541/1062–1147) and Almohad period as well, and the most interesting issue concerns Leo Africanus' (d. ca. 1554) description of the achievements of Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr (r. 580–595/1184–1199). According to this text, the Almohad ruler constructed a hospital, barracks, mosque and his tomb in Shāla, and the Marīnids retained Shāla as their burial site.[24] Since Leo Africanus saw monuments that are no longer standing today, there is no reason not to accept his account, even though we are right to be cautious about his knowledge of the site.[25]

Be that as it may, Abū Yūsuf chose an inhabited city, and one where princely graves had been located since the fifth/eleventh century, when – as Ismāʿīl discovered – two rulers of the Banū Yafran tribe were buried there (no. 5).[26] Abū Yūsuf followed a local tradition as he felt himself deserving of the privilege of veneration, but we still cannot connect this with the idea of *jihād*. In other words, he was a respected *mujāhid*, but we find no evidence that this would have been indicated on his tomb.

[19] *Ibid.*, 513; Ibn al-Aḥmar, *Rawḍat al-nisrīn*, 21.

[20] Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, 518.

[21] One can find a contradiction between two sources: Ibn Khaldūn suggests that he was buried in Fās, while Ibn al-Aḥmar states he was interred in Shāla (Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, XIII: 525; Ibn al-Aḥmar, *Rawḍat al-nisrīn*, 24). See also Ismāʿīl, *Tārīkh Shāla*, 313–19, where the author argues for Abū Saʿīd's burial to have taken place in Shāla. He finally identifies his burial place with the *qubba* behind the mosque's *miḥrāb* on the right (Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 194–200, 337–40).

[22] Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, XIII: 597–8; Ibn al-Aḥmar, *Rawḍat al-nisrīn*, 25.

[23] See Ismāʿīl's publications about the reinterpreted early Islamic history of Shāla.

[24] Giovan Lioni Africano, "Della descrittione dell'Africa et delle cose notabili che ivi sono", in *Primo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*, ed. Giovanni Battista Ramusio (Venice: Heredi di Lucantonio Giunti, 1550), pp. 1a–103b, esp. 31b.

[25] It is far from being proved that the pre-Marīnid structures can be identified with the buildings of al-Manṣūr under the prayer hall of the complex, but it is at least a possibility; Ismāʿīl, *Tārīkh Shāla*, 257–63; *idem*, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 158–61.

[26] Ismāʿīl, *Tārīkh Shāla*, 221; *idem*, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 201–8.

Later development of Shāla

Another intention worthy investigating is that of Abū l-Ḥasan, who surrounded Shāla with ramparts and founded numerous buildings in the complex. If his patronage was meant to send a specific message, one might imagine that it would be suggested by the dedicational inscription on the main gate (Figure 5). It reads as follows:

> I take refuge in God from the stoned Satan; in the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful; may God bless and save our lord, Muḥammad and his family. Building the wall of this blessed ribāṭ was ordered by our master, the sultan, the leader of the Muslims, Abū l-Ḥasan, the son of our master, the sultan, the leader of the Muslims, the saint, the late Abū Saʿīd […]. The completion was on the last day of Dhū l-Ḥijja in the year 739 [8 July 1339].[27]

However, this text in itself does not allow us to deduce the aim of the founder. The most important point is that it was meant as a *ribāṭ*, but naming the type of building does not necessarily bring us closer to its function.

It was assumed until the end of the last century that *ribāṭ* had mostly meant a place where a religious community lived for pious practices and *jihād*, but Jacqueline Chabbi has argued for separating these two functions. While *ribāṭ*s in the early centuries of Islam generally referred to defence posts along the North African coast, the term gradually became synonymous with the *zāwiya* or *ṣūfī* convent. These buildings were usually constructed around a shrine, maintaining the religious, but not the martial function of earlier *ribāṭ*s.[28] The confusion of the terms *ribāṭ* and *zāwiya* can also be found in primary sources: the building attached to ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq's tomb is called *zāwiya* by Ibn Abī Zarʿ and *ribāṭ* by Ibn Khaldūn.[29]

The eighth/fourteenth-century Moroccan historian, Ibn Marzūq (d. 781/1379), also explains these terms to us:

> These zāwiyas are what they call ribāṭs and khānaqas in the east [of the Islamic world]. The khānaqa is a name for the ribāṭ, and it is a Persian word. The ribāṭ – in jurisconsults' terminology – is an expression for a place for devoting oneself to jihād and guarding. For the ṣūfīs, it is an expression for a place in which worship is performed.[30]

[27] See the Arabic text with translation in Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 316.

[28] Jacqueline Chabbi, "Ribāṭ, 1: History and development of the institution", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., volumes I–XII (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2004), VIII: 493–506, esp. 501–5. As she states, every *ribāṭ* must be considered in its own context; the name in itself does not indicate the function; see also Sheila S. Blair, Jonathan G. Katz, "Zāwiya, 1: Architecture, 2: In North Africa", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., volumes I–XII (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2004), XI: 466–8, and, for a similar opinion, Hugh Kennedy, "The Ribāṭ in the Early Islamic World", in *Western Monasticism Ante Litteram: The Spaces of Monastic Observance in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Hendrik Dey and Elizabeth Fentress (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 161–75; cf. Georges Marçais, "Ribāṭ", in *E.J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Martijn Th. Houtsma et al., volumes I–VIII (Leiden: Brill, 1993, repr.), VI: 1150–3.

[29] Ibn Abī Zarʿ, *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, 491; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, 435.

[30] Muḥammad b. Marzūq al-Tilimsānī, *Al-musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ al-ḥasan fī maʾāthir wa-maḥāsin mawlānā Abī l-Ḥasan*, ed. María J. Viguera (Algiers: al-Sharika al-Waṭaniyya li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1401/1981), p. 411.



Figure 4. The mosque of Shāla

From all this evidence, we can clearly see, that *ribāṭ*s did not necessarily have a martial function. One might add that Ibn Jubayr (d. 614/1217), the famous Mediterranean traveller, had already mentioned the equivalence of *ribāṭ* and *khānaqa* in connection with a *ṣūfī* edifice in Raʾs al-ʿAyn in northern Syria.[31] In the case of Shāla, we should explain the label on the basis of what the site really was: a religious complex with a mosque, shrines and accommodation for pilgrims (see more below).

An interesting phrase appears in Ibn Abī Zarʿ's book, which states that Abū Yaʿqūb was buried in the *ribāṭ* of Shāla. This stray comment led Ismāʿīl to infer that the site had been surrounded by ramparts before Abū l-Ḥasan and even before the Marīnids, and this even seems to be proved by the words of Leo Africanus, who mentions the buildings of the Almohad Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr.[32] However, if one reads the great traveller's words in Arabic (as Ismāʿīl did), one finds that Leo Africanus did not mention enclosure walls (*aswār*), but simply walls (*ḥawāʾiṭ*), after the city – and not its fortification – had been damaged.[33] Since we find neither clear historical nor archaeological evidence for it, we can assume that the site was unfortified until Abū l-Ḥasan's achievement, and the *ribāṭ* should be understood as a religious, *ṣūfī* communal structure without any military role. Abū l-Ḥasan only enclosed a large area and named it *ribāṭ*, but there is no need to consider any change in the meaning of this building type.

During Abū l-Ḥasan's patronage, the funerary complex of Shāla was redeveloped although the chronology of some structures is still uncertain. Without a doubt, he founded some *qubba*s (domed mausolea), but the patronage of the *madrasa* or

[31] Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Jubayr, *Riḥla: The Travels of Ibn Jubayr,* ed. William Wright and Michael J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1907), p. 243, see also p. 284, where the author makes similar statements about some buildings in Damascus.

[32] Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 66–8, quoting Leo Africanus' text in Arabic.

[33] The French version of Leo Africanus' account (the origin of the Arabic translation) says "reconstruit les murs", while the first, Italian edition of the text says "rinouo le mura". See Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Déscription de l'Afrique*, trans. Alexis Épaulard, volumes I–II (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1956), I: 166; in the first edition: Africano, "Della descrittione … " 31b. The text is at least ambiguous, but on the site we can see no trace of an earlier rampart than that of Abū l-Ḥasan.



Figure 5. The main gate of Shāla

zāwiya (no. 10) and its *muṣallā* (prayer hall; Figure 3, no. 11) has been attributed to Abū Saʿīd II.[34] Abū l-Ḥasan founded a *qubba* for himself (Figure 6, no. 7) and interred several family members including his son, Abū Mālik (d. 740/1339) in Shāla.[35] A building of great interest is the common funerary hall (no. 9), which is quite hard to appreciate today. Basset and Lévi-Provençal first discovered it and attributed it to Abū l-Ḥasan. Then Ismāʿīl reconsidered this almost completely destroyed building, once covered with a dome and established to house the tombs of the martyrs of Tarifa.[36]

After presenting the south-western part of the complex – which includes every important structure except for the *zāwiya* or *madrasa* – we shall explain the placement of these buildings. The first courtyard and the mosque are surprisingly poor with no trace of decoration,[37] unlike the mausolea of the funerary court. This contrast in decoration one might perceive as representing a path leading from the poverty of earthly life towards paradise. The whole complex is directed towards Mecca with a spring (called *ʿAyn al-Janna* or "Spring of Paradise") flowing on its *qibla* side and feeding a beautiful garden (Figure 7, no. 12).

In the Islamic – as well as in the Christian – world, paradise and gardens were connected on a mental level;[38] thus the latter was the ideal place for a family necropolis. The intention of this pious attitude was most probably to anticipate salvation in an already prepared heaven. Reaching the courtyard of the mausolea, one can sense that

[34] Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 332.

[35] See Ismāʿīl, *Tārīkh Shāla*, 320–8, with references to historical sources.

[36] Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 216–25.

[37] Except for the tile mosaic decoration of the gate on the left side of the courtyard, but this must have belonged to a later phase in the construction of the complex (see below).

[38] The closest parallel is the Rawḍa in the contemporary Alhambra, conceived by Muḥammad II (r. 671–701/1273–1302). The funerary site of the Naṣrid rulers was founded to create their own paradise, the garden where every soul may rest in peace; James Dickie (Yaqub Zaki), "The Palaces of the Alhambra", in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 135–51, esp. 144–5.



Figure 6. The qubba of Abū l-Ḥasan

the garden and its water were the focal point of the site. The complex was arranged to manifest the path taking the rulers to paradise through the pure mosque of the Earth, which culminates in the *qubba*s representing domes of heaven.[39]

The question of the *zāwiya/ madrasa*

The dating of the north-eastern part of the complex, i.e. the *zāwiya/ madrasa* (no. 10) and the *muṣallā* (no. 11) is problematic. With their rich decoration and the latter's once probably splendid roof structure,[40] they might have been intended to represent the sovereign's munificence towards religious projects, and we may say the same of the sumptuous gate that leads to the *zāwiya/ madrasa* from the first courtyard (no. 2).

The site was furnished for pilgrims, and at this point we should not forget the almost unique aspect of Shāla designed for them: the corridor for

[39] We have learnt from studies by Oleg Grabar and others the basic meaning of this structure; see, for example his "The Islamic Dome: Some Considerations", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 22 (1963): 191–8; *idem*, "From Dome of Heaven to Pleasure Dome", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49 (1990): 15–21. The idea of paradise could not have been expressed in a more obvious way in Shāla, most of the Qur'ānic inscriptions on Abū l-Ḥasan's *qubba* refer to heaven or the day of judgement. These are the Qur'ān, 2 (*Sūrat al-Baqarā*), 285; 3 (*Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*), 133, 135 (first part from both) and 185; and 16 (*Sūrat al-Naḥl*), 31–2. The texts are collected in Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 288, 292, although the Qur'ān references there are mostly incorrect. Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1375) praises the gardens (the Arabic *janna* means both garden and paradise) of Shāla in one of his poems; Lisān al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Khaṭīb, *Raqm al-ḥulal fī naẓm al-duwal* (Tunis: al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿUmūmiyya, 1316AH), pp. 98–100. One might find it surprising that, although Muḥammad Būjandār mentions the paradise garden of Shāla upon reading Ibn al-Khaṭīb (Būjandār, *Shāla wa-āthāru-hā*, 55), only Riyaz Mansur Latif renewed this notion in 2011 (Latif, *Ornate Vision*, 37).

[40] In the unpublished manuscript of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Dukkālī, *Al-durra al-yatīma fī waṣf Shāla l-ḥadītha wa-l-qadīma* (written in the early twentieth century), the author mentions the *qubba* of a mosque in Shāla, but Ismāʿīl rejects the possibility that this prayer hall could have been covered with a dome; Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 80–1. Marçais proposed a pyramidal roof analogous with several contemporary *madrasa*s (Marçais, *L'Architecture musulmane*, 283).



Figure 7. The garden of Shāla

circumambulation around the *miḥrāb*.[41] This feature is more reminiscent of a *zāwiya* than a *madrasa*, although the general architectural features recall the numerous *madrasa*s built by the Marīnids.

According to Ismāʿīl, the common funerary hall of the martyrs, built by Abū l-Ḥasan, was joined to the *zāwiya*/ *madrasa* without any logical connection, and so he gave the latter structure an earlier date, saying that it could not have been made by the same patron, but was most probably constructed by Abū Saʿīd II.[42] However, the dome of the martyrs had not been conceived of previously; it was the defeat in 741/1340 that forced the patron to create a burial site for the deceased. This immediate need and lack of space on the site, where buildings had already been constructed, can easily explain the archaeological incongruity. Accordingly, we cannot exclude Abū l-Ḥasan as a possible founder of the *madrasa*/ *zāwiya*.

Decisive evidence of the patron and type of building might have been found in the dedicatory inscription (Figure 8), if it were full and reliable. But the tiles were found in fragments in 1930, then pieced together and reconstructed into one line, twice as long as the inscription we have today. Some years ago it used to read:

> Praise be to God, the One; this *zāwiya* was founded by our master, the scholar, the lieutenant, the caliph, the leader of the believers (*amīr al-muʾminīn*), the sultan Abū Saʿīd ʿUthmān, who died in 25 *Dhū l-Qaʿda* 731 [30 August 1331].[43]

This inscription seems to prove that Abū Saʿīd II built a *zāwiya* (and not a *madrasa*), but the text is rather problematic. The Marīnid rulers always used the title *amīr al-muslimīn* (leader of the Muslims) and only Abū ʿInān preferred to be referred to as

[41] The circumambulation of pilgrims was still current in the twentieth century. For the rituals, see Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 419–22.
[42] Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 324–33.
[43] For the discovery of the inscription and the Arabic text, see Ismāʿīl, *Dirāsāt jadīda*, 193–6, 200, Figure 71. Quite recently half of the inscription has disappeared; compare Latif, *Ornate Vision*, Figure 1.20 with Figure 8 in the present article.



Figure 8. The dedicatory inscription of the *zāwiya*

amīr al-muʾminīn.[44] The fact that the Marīnids took special care in the wording of inscriptions makes this dedicatory text inconclusive, and it might be considered a twentieth-century forgery. Consequently, the epigraphic evidence does not help us to reach a final answer. At this point, we can only conjecture a building phase by Abū Saʿīd II, and also that someone commemorated it with an inscription after his death. We shall now turn to archaeological sources.

The most interesting part of the building for establishing the structural sequence is the south-western wall of the *zāwiya/ madrasa*, especially between the dome of the martyrs and the prayer hall, where two parallel walls were built together. The outer one runs along the prayer hall, while the inner continues in the other direction as far as the north-western wall of the *khalwa*. The southern corner of the *zāwiya/ madrasa* (Figure 9) shows that the outer wall was built first, then the north-western wall of the prayer hall (because the latter leans against the former), and finally the inner wall of the *zāwiya/ madrasa* (because it fills the remaining space), but the wall still predates the cell partitions along it. From all these structures we can only date the inner wall. Because it encompasses the dome of the martyrs, it must have been built by Abū l-Ḥasan after 741/1340. One point deserves special attention: the walls of the prayer hall do not date from the same phase as the cell partitions, and the inner wall was built between those two phases. Consequently, we should look for one construction before and one after Abū l-Ḥasan's dome of the martyrs.

I would like to suggest that the outer brick wall once encompassed Abū Saʿīd II's building (a *zāwiya*), of which only the prayer hall and most of this wall remain. Then, in order to make a space for the dome of the martyrs, Abū l-Ḥasan had to demolish part of the enclosure. The inner stone wall was needed for structural reasons to support the weight of the dome, and it reached as far as the wall of the prayer hall at the southern corner of the *zāwiya*. A third building phase took place after the completion of the dome of the martyrs, when Abū l-Ḥasan had to partly reconstruct the *zāwiya*. Reassuringly, the dedicatory inscription can be attributed to Abū l-Ḥasan, who commemorated his father's achievement posthumously; he only modified the building.

We have seemingly explained the different building phases and even the dedicatory inscription can be considered mostly correct, in that the *zāwiya* of Abū Saʿīd II existed. We can also mention a further piece of evidence: the *ḥabūs* (endowment) text of Shāla's *zāwiya*. Although it is unfortunately fragmentary, with no sign of a

[44] David S. Powers, *Law, Society, and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 82; see also Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 41–5.



Figure 9. The southern corner of the *zāwiya-madrasa*, the junction of the outer (1) and the inner (3) walls of the *zāwiya-madrasa*, and the north-western wall of the prayer hall (2). The numerals indicate the chronological sequence.

date or founder's name, Ismāʿīl has convincingly related it to the building of Abū Saʿīd II on the basis of analogous *ḥabūs* texts.[45]

The only problem arises upon reading a mostly overlooked historical source of al-Numayrī (d. after 774/1372), the most informative and descriptive account of Shāla among the primary written sources. It clearly mentions Abū ʿInān and his foundation of a *madrasa* next to the *qubba*s,[46] and this building can only be identified with the "*zāwiya*" of Abū Saʿīd II, which markedly resembles the Marīnid *madrasa*s. Abū ʿInān either reconstructed the building and converted it into a *madrasa*, or at least claimed to have done so. Since the building in Shāla clearly follows the well-established layout of the *madrasa*s, I believe that Abū ʿInān carried out the last building phase on this structure, but probably only added the partition walls between the cells.

The former *zāwiya* could easily provide what was needed for the religious rites performed on the site and receive the pilgrims, who clearly arrived in great numbers. Ibn al-Khaṭīb and al-Numayrī – among others – mention that sanctity of the site and the religious practices performed there were widely known.[47] The

[45] For the text of the inscription, see Ismāʿīl, *Dirāsāt jadīda*, 204–5, figs. 73–6, for the attribution, see ibid. 212–22.

[46] Ibn al-Ḥājj al-Numayrī, *Fayḍ al-ʿubāb wa-ifāḍat qidāḥ al-ādāb fī l-ḥaraka al-saʿīda ilā Qasanṭīna wa-l-Zāb*, ed. Muḥammad b. Shaqrūn (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990), p. 199.

[47] For Ibn al-Khaṭīb's writings about the site, see Būjandār, *Shāla wa-āthāru-hā*, 46–8, 53–4; Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 22–5; also al-Numayrī, *Fayḍ al-ʿubāb*, 197–201. It has also been proposed that the building on the left side of the main gate was a hospice for pilgrims built by Abū l-Ḥasan or more probably by Abū ʿInān (Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 81–4). Ismāʿīl identifies this structure as a *zāwiya*, although without detailing the relevant evidence (Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 31–2). The baths in Shāla can also be considered as a basic facility on a pilgrimage site. It has also been proposed that some finds during more recent excavations in Shāla were connected with pilgrimage (Abdelaziz El Khayari, Ahmed Ettahiri and Mohammed Kbiri-Alaoui, "Chellah, de l'Antiquité aux pélerinage-moussem", *Nouvelles Archéologiques et Patrimoniales* 2 (1998): 4–6).

only remaining question concerns the motives of Abū ʿInān, and we shall return to this in the final section of our study.

Founding the sacred *ribāṭ*

After enumerating Shāla's most important Marīnid buildings, giving them their most likely interpretation and venturing to establish their chronological order, we should return to the question of the *ribāṭ* for a moment.

As we have seen, Abū Yūsuf had in mind a family complex with tombs for both pious and political reasons. The site was meant to be a place of veneration for local inhabitants and pilgrims; their pious practices would help to keep the dynasty's star in the ascendant and ensure intercession for deceased family members on the day of judgement. Abū l-Ḥasan did not change the purpose of the site but re-designed it on a grandiose scale. The surrounding wall was meant to enclose the already existing garden of paradise, as well as to create a pilgrimage site with markets, as we find in the description by Muḥammad b. ʿAbbād (d. 792/1390).[48]

The connection with *jihād* is clearly not indicated by either the complex or the inscriptions.[49] Thus we could conclude that the *ribāṭ* of Shāla was a religious community site with pious practices for deceased legal rulers and some others, but in one respect – the rampart and the towers – it does undeniably resemble a *jihād*-fighters' fortress. These features may have referred to the *mujāhid* aspect of the dead rulers, but could also be understood as the reappearance of a form representative of the *ribāṭ*, albeit without the fighters and with a different meaning, that of a *zāwiya*.

Since the question of the meaning of *ribāṭ* in this case remains unanswered, we should review the way the site was used. As we have seen, there were more applicants for mausolea in Abū l-Ḥasan's time, among them his son, Abū Mālik, who died on *jihād* in Andalusia, and other relatives.[50] Abū ʿInān followed this tradition when he had a *qubba* built for his mother, Shams al-Ḍuḥā (d. 750/1349), finished his father's mausoleum, and interred his sister, al-Ḥurra al-Muʿaẓẓama[51] and also his father's vizier, Abū Zayyān al-Suwaydī (d. 755/1354),[52] in Shāla. The most interesting occasion in the present context is probably the entombment of the martyrs of Tarifa, who were killed on the battlefield of Andalusia in 741/1340 and were transferred to Shāla by Abū l-Ḥasan.

These historical facts lead us in two opposite directions when we look for a conclusion: one is that Shāla is the site of a family necropolis, and the other is that it is the burial place of the *mujāhid*s. We have now arrived at the long-awaited interpretation of Shāla: the site did not strictly follow either of these routes. Those who were buried were intended to be commemorated for different reasons. The *mujāhid* aspect does not appear in most cases, but it undeniably played an important role in some of the burials, so Ibn al-Khaṭīb was partly correct in his

[48] *Kitāb rasāʾil al-kubrā*, the relevant passage is translated in Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 26.

[49] One might argue against this on the basis of the epithets of the rulers, among which the word *mujāhid* appears, for example on Abū l-Ḥasan's funerary stone. For the text and its translation, see *ibid.*, 423–4. However, the rulers used the word *mujāhid* on numerous other monuments that had no connection with *jihād* – for example on *madrasa*s.

[50] See Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 142.

[51] Al-Numayrī, *Fayḍ al-ʿubāb*, 197–9.

[52] Ibn Marzūq, *Al-musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ al-ḥasan*, 368; al-Numayrī, *Fayḍ al-ʿubāb*, 200.

conception.[53] The reasons for reverence might have differed, but the most important reason was definitely the princely family's right. Ensuring the commemoration of deceased family members was the original intention and in this the rulers succeeded. Then came the occasions during Abū l-Ḥasan's reign, when someone desired to be venerated as a warrior of *jihād*, and was allowed to be buried inside the commemorative *ribāṭ*, a dynastic necropolis with its paradise.

The word *ribāṭ* can also be explained as opposing the already existing *zāwiya* built in Shāla by Abū Saʿīd II. The *zāwiya* was a smaller, functioning building in the *khalwa*, but Abū l-Ḥasan claims to have built the surrounding walls, thus calling to mind fortified complexes, but fulfilling the same pious role as a *zāwiya*.

Abū ʿInān and his *madrasa*

The incorporation of a *madrasa* into a funerary complex comes as no surprise, and the closest analogy can be found at the shrine of Abū Madyan Shuʿayb (d. 594/1197) near Tlemcen, founded by Abū l-Ḥasan in 739/1338–39. A notable difference in this complex is that accommodation for pilgrims and *zāwiya* dwellers can also be found beside the *madrasa*.[54]

Concerning Abū ʿInān's reconstruction in Shāla, the only peculiarity is the removal of much-needed accommodation for pilgrims. The answer to this anomaly may be found in the structure next to the main gate of Shāla, which probably functioned as hostelry and *zāwiya*,[55] and we can assume that it was built by Abū ʿInān to replace the one in the *khalwa*. According to Ibn ʿAbbād, the *zāwiya* was built for the *ṣūfī* ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Yabūrī, who taught there around the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century.[56]

If we use the various terms for types of building conventionally, we might mistakenly suspect that there were strict divisions between the meanings of these terms. In fact, we should not consider that there was necessarily a sharp change in the functions of the *zāwiya*-*madrasa* of Shāla after it was refurbished; occasional pilgrims may well have been welcome along with the students and mystics.

The *madrasa*'s siting in the *khalwa* can reasonably be connected to the most basic political aim of the Marīnids established since the time of Abū Yūsuf: to be commemorated and venerated by their subjects and especially by the religious elite. For this reason, the Marīnids founded *madrasa*s in other cities and educated loyal religious and administrative intellectuals. This political intention might have been even more effective at the main site of their veneration.

[53] In one of his letters, Ibn al-Khaṭīb praises Abū l-Ḥasan and his ancestors as *jihād* warriors who built their necropolis, but this text in itself does not necessarily indicate that they connected the two ideas. The conception of Ibn al-Khaṭīb sounds more like a later sense of reverence and there is no doubt that it conflicts with some of the burials. He venerated the *mujāhid*s of Shāla, but this had not been the original aim of Shāla's patrons. The text is quoted in Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maqqarī al-Tilimsānī (d. 1632), *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, volumes I–VIII (Beirut: Dār Maṣādir, 1408/1988), IV: 408.

[54] For a description of this complex, see Sheila S. Blair, "Sufi Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Early Fourteenth Century", *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): pp. 35–49, esp. 37–40.

[55] Thus, we might accept both interpretations about this building: Basset and Lévi-Provençal, "Chella", 81–4; Ismāʿīl, *Ḥafāʾir Shāla*, 31–2.

[56] Paul Nwiya, *Ibn ʿAbbād de Ronda (1332–1390): Un mystique prédicateur à la Qarawīyīn de Fès* (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1961), p. 62.